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# Metaphor Within/Without Metaphysics: Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida.

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**Metaphor within/without metaphysics: Nietzsche, Heidegger,  
and Derrida**

**Kim, Jonggab, Ph.D.**

**The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Col., 1992**

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METAPHOR WITHIN/WITHOUT  
METAPHYSICS:  
NIETZSCHE, HEIDEGGER, AND DERRIDA

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
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in

Department of English

by  
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## ABSTRACT

The contemporary preoccupation with metaphor lies in its capability of deconstructing and disempowering metaphysics, and of creating a logic of uncertainty or a Derridian logic of supplements in opposition to the logic of identity and of non-contradiction. As a figure of speech saying one thing but meaning something else, metaphor contains in itself a certain alterity and otherness which resists a logical identity as well as a systematic philosophy.

In my study of metaphor in the texts of Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida, I inquire into the problematic relation or difference between philosophy and metaphor, focusing on how the former is metaphorized at the hands of literature. At issue is the question of how Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida confronted by way of metaphor the problem of logocentrism inherent in the history of western philosophy. If metaphor has been traditionally interpreted back into a conceptual term and thus is to be undone at the very moment of recognition, now metaphor undoes concept and philosophy.

In my discussion of Nietzsche, the metaphoric resistance to concept is shown to be characterized by the metaphor of a journey which never arrives at its

destination. For Nietzsche, as soon as metaphor is born, its concept, the supposed parents of metaphor, dies; metaphor is an orphan whose parent died at its birth. My discussion of Heidegger is also dominated by this metaphor of journey. As for Heidegger, words are on the way toward beings and Being, but there is no happy union between them as in conceptual unity. Always on the way toward beings but never reaching its destination, discourse in Heidegger is fundamentally metaphoric and is characterized by the fundamental gap and distance between saying and meaning. Finally in my study of Derrida, I try to demonstrate how this journey of metaphor is forced to come to its destination by the intrinsic necessity of philosophy for its survival--philosophy is formulated by its suppression of the other, metaphoricity. Philosophy's relation to metaphysics is thus a strange mixture of dependence and suppression.

INTRODUCTION  
Crisis of Discourse  
and Metaphor

Recently much critical and philosophical attention has been paid to the problem of metaphor. Such increasing attention is surprising, since metaphor has been regarded as no more than a figure of speech throughout the history of philosophy and literary theory, thereby not deserving any independent thematic treatment. But suddenly metaphor has become to play an immensely significant role in both philosophy and literary theory, and innumerable articles and books on metaphor have begun to pour out as if to prove the growing philosophical importance of the study of metaphor. What does this unexpected happening of "metaphormania" suggest?<sup>1</sup> How and why does metaphor begin to invade all discourses like medieval plague? Has the meaning of metaphor changed, or have we changed and metaphorized unwittingly so that we feel at home in metaphor? If this contemporary enthusiasm for metaphor is

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<sup>1</sup> In the Preface to his collection of essays on metaphor, Philosophical Perspectives on Metaphor, Mark Johnson exclaims that "We are in the midst of a metaphormania," and paraphrases Wayne Booth's analogical prediction that "judging from the jump in interest in metaphor between 1940 and the present, if we extrapolate to the year 2039, there will then be more students of metaphor than there are people" (*italics added*) (ix).

considered, we cannot but ask these questions which pop up in chains.

According to the classic definition of metaphor by Aristotle, metaphor is one of the literal and rhetorical figures of speech that says one thing, but means another. This fundamental gap between saying and meaning, between intention and signification, is the very condition and essence of metaphor, thereby causing an inevitable pluralism or dissemination of metaphoric sayings. While literary and logical language is supposed to have clear, definite, and exact meanings, metaphor tends to upset and disrupt this ideal language paradigm and produces ambiguity and uncertainty. In order to check and control this unpleasant dissemination of meanings in metaphor, the study of metaphor has always involved the task of a good judge who has to extract facts from equivocation, circumvention, and beguilement. If philosophy is a judge, metaphor is a suspect to be judged, and the study of metaphor becomes criminology. When a judge succeeds in separating falsity and deception from truth, a suspect becomes either a criminal or an innocent; the undecidability of saying "yes" or "no" is transformed into a decisive saying of either "yes" or "no." If we translate this analogy (metaphor) into plain words, the study or theory of metaphor has aimed at reducing its ambiguity and vagueness to distinctiveness, transforming the unspeakability into speakability. The

truth elements of metaphor are to separated from false ones so that metaphoricity is undone. Thus the traditional theory of metaphor is a mode of self-destruction.

The word "theory" comes from the Greek verb theorein, to look at, to observe, to contemplate, and to examine. Here the act of looking involved in theorein is, we have to emphasize, not a private or individual behavior, but a public and social act. Upon some special occasions demanding justice and judgement, certain individuals were appointed as public delegates and judges (as theoros) in order officially to witness and tell their signification with authority. Theory is thus a matter of public discourse and public knowledge which are sanctioned by the city and are protected from any private whims and opinions.<sup>2</sup> Along with theory, criticism, etymologically speaking, has such a public and judicial implication: krisis means separation, dispute, trial, examination, and court of justice. To criticize is to separate untruth from truth, facts from illusions, in order to judge and decide as in a dispute concerning a legal case in court. Accordingly, the aim in both theory and criticism is to attain an authoritative public discourse, to attain socially reliable language with the ideal of clarity and distinctiveness.

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<sup>2</sup> In this etymological explication of the meaning of theory, I rely on Wlad Godzich's Foreword to de Man's Resistance to Theory (xiv-xv).

If theory and criticism are born out of the social necessity of public discourse and judgement, then the problem with their acts concerns the degree of their justice, that is, the question of how much their decisions and judgements can be justified and how much they are to be inevitably entangled with violence, for example, as in the trial of Socrates. What if truth cannot be boiled down into "yes" or "no," and truth, as with Heidegger, never discloses itself completely and withdraws itself into a darkness at the very moment of its revelation? What if a suspect is unable to give an indisputable alibi and a judge has no means to present any evidence in favor of or against his alibi unless he is caught on the spot? In the absence of evidence, a judge (theorist or critic) finds himself unable to judge: a suspect cannot be identified either as a criminal or an innocent. Here is the predicament of a judge. Even though he cannot judge, he, as a delegate appointed by the public, has to decide, because he cannot suspend the case forever. Here the figure of a judge takes an essential role, that is, in the absence of evidence he is free to make a suspect either a criminal or an innocent. A judge is possessed of a supreme power as a maker of reality and of truth as well as a maker of evidence. This power, however, accompanies a profound suspicion concerning the justice of a judge. As soon as the origin of his power is taken into consideration, it turns out that it is



exactly his inability to judge, his violence over a suspect, and his corruptibility that gives him such enormous power. Power goes along with guilt, misjudgment, corruption, and force. A judge is forced to judge, and in turn he gains power. If he is a private man, he may remain undecided and thus powerless. The fact that he is a public figure in the judicial system throws him into a totally different situation. As a judge who is appointed by the public, he has to make a public and official announcement which should be necessarily clear, exact, and unambiguous. As a member of the legal institution, his individuality is transformed into publicity, his right to undecidability into an obligation to decide.

Institution is an anonymous and impersonal power which transforms a metaphor into a literal and logical paraphrase or interpretation. Logical language, pursuing the principle of identity and non-contradiction, operates by binary opposition, true or false, yes or no, positive or negative. The degree to which a suspect is responsible for the crime and the complexity surrounding the crime are forgotten as soon as institution takes over the case. If metaphors are considered from that institutional and public perspective, they are, as Locke says, "for nothing else but to insinuate wrong ideas ... they are certainly, in all discourses that pretend to inform or instruct, wholly to be

avoided."<sup>3</sup> Literature, as the carrier of emotion, of personal and private discourse and opinions, is opposed to philosophy, which is supposed to be public and institutional. In this regard, criticism has a philosophical function as a surveillance of literature and as an interpreter of metaphor. Of course, the distinction between literature and philosophy cannot be pushed too rigorously, because the former contains the latter in itself and the latter is the violent transformation of the former. In its origin philosophical discourse is the negation, exclusion, and ignorance of metaphoric discourse.

The contemporary fascination with metaphor both in literary theory and philosophy is the reflection of our awareness of this violent origin of philosophy and of the public discourse of power. Philosophy does not have any solid ground on which to found itself, and its presumed traditional ground is only the forgetting of its groundlessness or metaphoricity. As such, postmodernism, if we employ such a term, can be characterized by its profound suspicion and consequent denouncement of any systematic philosophy, especially metaphysics at the vanguard of philosophy. Postmodern science, as Lyotard reports, is "theorizing its own evolution as discontinuous, catastrophic, nonrectifiable, and paradoxical. . . It is

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<sup>3</sup> John Locke, Essay Concerning Human Understanding, Vol. II, bk. III, chap. X, 146.

producing not the known, but the unknown."<sup>4</sup> "To risk meaning nothing" and "to start to play" is what Derrida proposes to aim in his writings.<sup>5</sup> In its reaction to public discourse, contemporary thinking seems to go toward a "counter-discourse" for whose formation metaphor is essential.<sup>6</sup> Nietzsche's deconstructive thinking renders truth as the double forgetting of metaphor or as the worn-out metaphor: "What is truth? a mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, ... Truths are illusions about which it has been forgotten that they are illusions, worn-out metaphors ..."<sup>7</sup> With Nietzsche, philosophy begins to dephilosophize itself, to put it otherwise, to metaphorize philosophy. Noticing such a metaphorical origin of philosophy, I. A. Richards maintains that "as it [philosophy] grows more abstract we think increasingly by means of metaphors that we profess not to be relying on. The metaphors we are avoiding steer our thought as much as those we accept."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Jean-François Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition, 60.

<sup>5</sup> Derrida, Positions, 14.

<sup>6</sup> Foucault uses the term of counter-discourse in defining the literature's reaction to representative language of philosophy in the nineteenth century. It is "non-discursive discourse: to manifest language in its brute being." See The Order of Things, 119, and 44ff.

<sup>7</sup> Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lying in an Extra-moral Sense," 250.

<sup>8</sup> I. A. Richards, The Philosophy of Rhetoric, 108.

In what context and how much is metaphor philosophy if Nietzsche and Richards are right? To reverse the question, how does philosophy become metaphor or literature? Is it possible to break the traditional barrier between them, and if so, is it desirable and legitimate in terms of truth and discourse? These questions are deconstructive strategies through which the relation between beings and their discourse (between a suspect and a judge) is unsettled and threatened to be reformulated under a new light, and they reflect the voice of those who require justice--the attempt of friends and families of a suspect to check the power of a judge by appealing to the final court of justice. According to Levinas, Western philosophy has been the history of injustice and power, the history of totalistic desire for power which subjugates the uncertainty and becoming of beings and violates the other.<sup>9</sup> For Heidegger, the history of Western metaphysics is punctuated and dominated by the forgetting of the difference between Being and beings as well as by the powerful desire to transform beings into a standing reserve. In the process of transformation from justice to power and from uncertainty to certainty, the absolute alterity of beings has been destroyed and appropriated into the logical space of

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<sup>9</sup> In his book Totality and Infinity Levinas defines Western traditional philosophy as a philosophy of power, against which he advocates a philosophy of justice and the ethics of the Other. See the chapter titled "Metaphysics and Transcendence," 33-52.

identity. Thus philosophy has been the discourse of power, official and public announcement, subjugation of the other, and forgetting of becoming.

The contemporary preoccupation with metaphor, it seems, lies in its capability of decomposing and disempowering power, of transforming a public discourse back to a private one, thereby creating a logic of uncertainty or a Derridian logic of supplements,<sup>10</sup> that is, pluralistic meanings against the totalitarian univocity. As a figure of speech saying one thing but meaning something else, metaphor contains in itself a certain alterity and otherness which is not easily translated into a logical identity. In opposition to the traditional interpretive paradigm wherein metaphor may be translated into literal words, now metaphor becomes something untranslatable--a suspect whose truth never comes to light, thus frustrating a judge's obligation to decide. However, such a deconstructive power of metaphor is also its impotence, and the ideal of justice is also its impossibility. The question is in regard to the fundamental complicity of justice with violence, that is, the question of how justice is possible or even conceivable without presupposing violence. By the same token, purely private or metaphoric discourse is also the impossibility of discourse; theoria, as a matter of public discourse, has

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<sup>10</sup> See Derrida, Of Grammatology, 141-64.

no space without polis, and criticism cannot come into being without violently separating truth from falsity. The pluralistic meanings inherent in metaphor can be the death of language, if they are never to be reducible into univocity. For its own survival, metaphor is in need of literal and logical discourse, as justice presupposes violence. If philosophy is destroyed by the hands of metaphor, metaphor is also to be deprived of its authority because of its complicity with philosophy.

Indicating only symptoms of public discourse, metaphor is not a solution to the contemporary crisis of public discourse. Rather than trying to resolve the crisis, philosophical interest with metaphor seems to encourage and radicalize it. As such, to confirm metaphor in philosophical discourse is "an affirmation that affirms nothing,"<sup>11</sup> an affirmation of neither philosophy nor literature. In the following studies of Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida (those "prophets of extremity"<sup>12</sup>), I want to inquire into such a problematic relation between philosophy and metaphor. This means to ask about the meaning of difference between philosophy and literature, between literal language and metaphoric language, from Nietzschean, Heideggerian, and Derridian perspectives. By

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<sup>11</sup> See Foucault's definition of "contestation" in Language, Counter-Memory, Practice, 36.

<sup>12</sup> Allan Megill, Prophets of Extremity: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida.

asking such a question, the nature of the contemporary crisis of discourse, I think, can be clarified and be properly situated. If philosophy is radicalized and invaded by metaphor, the crisis of public discourse is the crisis of the border which was supposed to exist between philosophy and literature. This border conflict issues in demands to redefine their proper territories. Here the question is the act of definition itself, if the border is always shifting since there are no proper territories belonging to either philosophy or metaphor.

With its focus of inquiry on the difference between philosophy (rather metaphysics) and metaphor, this study of Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida does not intend to present a new theory of metaphor or a better interpretive strategy of metaphor. At issue is the question of how these prophets of extremity confronted the crisis of public discourse by way of metaphor. If metaphor has been traditionally interpreted back into a conceptual term and thus is to be undone at the very moment of recognition, now metaphor resists such a conceptual translation. The crisis of public discourse is this strong resistance to conceptualization and to the traditional hierarchy of philosophy over literature. If there is any coherent theme or thesis in my reading of different authors, it is this metaphoric resistance to literal language or philosophy. In my discussion of Nietzsche, the resistance has been

characterized by another metaphor of metaphor, that is, the journey metaphor. As a figure of speech, that is, a linguistic phenomenon characterized by not meaning what it says, metaphor is always to be interpreted by being transformed into a concept which means what it says. However, this interpretation in my reading of Nietzsche is suspended, since metaphor's journey to concept is structurally unable to come to its destination. For Nietzsche, as soon as metaphor is born, its concept, the supposed parents of metaphor, dies; metaphor is an orphan whose parents died at its birth. Thus metaphor cannot return to its concept. My discussion of Heidegger is also dominated by this metaphor of journey. As for Heidegger, the nature of words is metaphoric. Words are on the way toward beings and Being, but there is no happy union between them as in conceptual unity. Being always on the way toward beings but never reaching its destination, discourse in Heidegger is fundamentally metaphoric and is characterized by the fundamental gap and distance between saying and meaning.

From a Nietzschean and Heideggerian perspective, metaphor is a wandering (of an orphan) on the way toward metaphysical presence and Being (his home and parents). Philosophy as public discourse always attempted to put an end to this metaphorical wandering by finding a concept corresponding to its destination. In my discussion of



Derrida, especially of his non-conceptual concept of differance, I tried to demonstrate how this metaphysical necessity of conceptual translation of metaphor is the very *raison d'être* of metaphysics--metaphysics is formulated by its suppression of the other, metaphoricity. Metaphysics' relation to metaphor is thus a strange mixture of dependence and suppression.

In inquiring into the relation between metaphor and philosophy, I replace the latter by metaphysics, which thus becomes a metaphor for the whole of philosophy. My reasoning is as follows: Heidegger redefines the history of western philosophy as the history of metaphysics, and by so doing he instigates a contemporary ongoing discussion about the nature of philosophy as metaphysics and its relation to literature, after Kant's exclusion of metaphysics from the proper domain of philosophy. For those who are influenced by Heidegger, his request to overcome metaphysics becomes a kind of imperative for a new way of thinking, and his request raises naturally another related question of whether or not metaphysics can be overcome. As for Derrida, most of his writings, not to mention his numerous readings of Heidegger and his redefinition of metaphysics as logocentrism or as language itself, can be seen as critical attempts to respond to such a question. It is however an open question whether there has ever been metaphysics in a sense that Heidegger and Derrida defined.

In discussing the texts of three different prophets of extremity, I do not pretend that there is any linear progression or consistent development of themes common to them all. Since they articulated their thoughts from their different perspectives, it is frustrating to seek a theme on which they converge without exception. And their relation to their predecessors is that of misreading rather than that of an evaluative and dialectically correct reading. Because of this radical break of their perspectives intrinsic in their thinking, I abandoned my early attempt to let them come to the common horizon in a linear and progressive way, and instead I have pursued my topic from different angles. In pursuing my topic I have read the texts of these authors for their implications. Since their texts are neither thematically nor explicitly concerned with the problem of metaphor, I had to bring to the surface that which remains implied in the texts. This implicative reading of their texts out of such a profound necessity may appear sometimes in conflict with the intentions of their authors. Nonetheless, my readings can, I think, be textually justified.

CHAPTER ONE  
Irony of Metaphor  
in Nietzsche

That Nietzsche's life-long counter-evaluation of western philosophy and Christianity culminates in his conception of the will to power does not mean that he founds another system of thoughts which will replace old ones. As an interminable overcoming of itself and as a chaotic and contradictory diversity of primordial impulses, the will to power is not a concept, but the very limit and the impossibility of conceptualization or generalization. It is another name for difference.<sup>1</sup> As such, it finds its earliest expression in the notion of "pathos of difference" in his first book The Birth of Tragedy, which accounts for the opposition between Dionysus and Apollo, between Dionysus and Socrates, and between Greek music and modern opera. Although these binary oppositions are not those of kind and quality, but of degree and quantity, they have been born out of a fundamental "pathos of difference," and form a necessary and inevitable opposition for the

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<sup>1</sup> Seeing the relation of forces in will, Gilles Deleuze describes the will to power as "the difference in the origin." See his Nietzsche and Philosophy, 8. For a clearer explanation of will to power as difference, see Alphonso Lingis, "The Will to Power," 40-41.

evaluation of values and forces.<sup>2</sup> For the sake of its self-overcoming, the will to power initiates and establishes such temporary opposition, temporary in that once they serve out their purpose of self-overcoming, they are discarded for another oppositions. Never being theoretical or conceptual, they are a practical and economical opposition, and their validity lies in their force of engendering the continuous play of replacements. For example, the opposition of Dionysus and Apollo in The Birth of Tragedy is valid only for the early pre-Socratic Greek and as soon as Socrates appears, it is replaced by another opposition, that is, between Dionysus and Socrates. And with the introduction of Christianity Socrates is replaced by Christ.<sup>3</sup> Since these oppositions are

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<sup>2</sup> Deleuze explains the relation of quantity and quality in Nietzsche as follows: "Nietzsche always believes that forces were quantitative and had to be defined quantitatively ... However Nietzsche was no less certain that a purely quantitative determination of forces remained abstract, incomplete and ambiguous." See his Nietzsche & Philosophy, p. 43.

<sup>3</sup> As for an example of such metaphoric replacements, see Sarah Kofman, Nietzsche et la métaphore. In chapter IV, titled "Architectures Métaphoriques," she traces the transformation of metaphors, which represent the stages of the procession of science, away from active life toward nihilism or abstract ideals: "De l'architecture de la ruche à celle du cachot, en passant par celles de la pyramide égyptienne, du columbarium romain, de la Tour (de Babel), du château fort; celle de la toile d'araignée, d'un simple assemblage de poutres, d'un échafaudage, tel est l'itinéraire métaphorique qu'emprunte Nietzsche" (90). This chapter has been translated by Peter T. Connor and Mira Kamdar in Looking After Nietzsche.

historically determined, they are temporal through and through, and their temporal replacements are the very expression of the will to power. Whenever the will to power emerges and is realized, it is through the form of metaphorical replacements.

For Nietzsche, the danger of Socrates (metaphysics) lies in his attempt to resolve the opposition and to turn their metaphorical and historical play of replacements into a never-changing concept, into truth. Socrates, in Nietzsche's critique of him, represents a symptom of decay and of death, since he wants to freeze life into a cold eternity by depriving it of historicity, temporality, and the play of transformations: death is the very way of attaining eternal truth. It is in the figure of Socrates that Nietzsche, in The Birth of Tragedy and The Twilight of Idols, finds the essence of Socratic irony. In the search for eternal and universal truth, which for Nietzsche does not exist at all, Socrates rather rejected truth as well as life, truth in the sense of plurality and temporality. Therefore, Socrates is the figure of impossible search and longing, since he looks for something that does not exist. In an ironic turn, he who wanted to cure and improve life ended up rejecting life itself. As with the example of Socrates, the search for truth in the sense of ahistorical universality is destined to be the very story of irony.

Irony therefore is opposed to metaphor in a way that Socrates is opposed to Dionysus, and likewise this opposition is created out of the will to power.<sup>4</sup>

Truth, seen from the perspective of metaphor, is a temporal play of replacements, whereas truth in irony is an atemporal gaze into eternity and oneness. For ironic

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<sup>4</sup> Throughout this chapter, I use the term "irony" with two senses in mind, that is, a self-conscious or self-reflective irony and an irony ignorant or unconscious of its ironicity. As I will explicate later, Dionysus represents the first type of irony, Socrates the second type. In defining Socrates as an unreflective ironist, I follow Kierkegaard's The Concept of Irony: with continual reference to Socrates. In that book Kierkegaard says of Socratic irony that "His [Socrates'] abstract is totally empty designation. He starts with the concrete and arrives at the most abstract and there, where the investigation should begin, he stops ... so the abstract as the negative has its truth in the ironic" (46). Here Socrates is described as an abstract philosopher, who makes, though unwittingly, life empty and void with his conceptualization.

This twofold differentiation of irony, I think, is necessary, since irony essentially relates the question of self to reflexivity. Naive philosophers and scientists, believing concepts and truths as universal and absolute, subordinate themselves to them and are bound to them to the degree of becoming their prisoners. But contrary to philosophers and scientists, artists, who are conscious of the falsity and groundlessness of these concepts, use them ironically, that is, without believing their truth values, and they use these already-existing concepts only in order to turn them into metaphors for their artistic purpose of creation and freedom. Charles I. Glicksberg explains how Nietzsche, along with other major contemporary writers, "utilize[s] the resources of irony as part of [his] metaphysical outlook": "[His] irony embodies an existential contradiction, not to be reconciled by the casuistry of reason, between the human longing for ultimate meaning and the lack of meaning..." See his The Ironic Vision in Modern Literature, 5. Later in my discussion of irony and metaphor I will inquire into how irony gives birth to metaphors.

Socrates, truth is the unity of all ideals, such as reason, virtue, justice, and happiness. Since that desired unity cannot be realized, Socrates's search for truth is a journey into a never-never land. As for metaphor, it readjusts and focuses the sight of the ironist fixed upon the eternal truth of being so that he can see its diversity and multiplicity. Of course, the relation between metaphor and irony is much more complex than this brief characterization of them, and their borderline sometimes appears impossible to define: the opposition of irony and metaphor is not one of kind, but of degree.<sup>5</sup> But as with other binary oppositions, irony and metaphor are a necessary pair, crucial for the reading and understanding of Nietzsche.

While Socrates' search for being can be characterized by his effort to find its center and unity in its plurality, Nietzsche's investigation into being is rather an attempt to decenter the presumed center of being and introduce a play of its multiplicity free of the center. If being is text, and Socrates and Nietzsche are readers,

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<sup>5</sup> According to Wayne Booth, though they are same in that they say one thing but mean another, the process of decoding them is different from each other. The metaphoric process of decoding is usually one of "exploration or extension," while that of irony is "one of repudiation or reversal." Of course, this distinction, though very useful, cannot be pushed too far, and it is true mostly for conventional metaphors. See his A Rhetoric of Irony, 22-24.

Socrates is ironic insofar as he attempts to find a non-existing center in a text, whereas Nietzsche is metaphoric in that he replaces a presumed center with peripheral points.<sup>6</sup> Then the problem with the relation of metaphor and irony becomes a problem of reading, in a diverse sense that such an inquiry presupposes a reading of Nietzsche who in turn is a reader of Socrates, who is a reader of being. The reader is either ironic or metaphoric, even before he sets out an investigation into the relation between irony and metaphor. When one takes reading as a centripetal movement into a center, he tends to be ironic, and finds himself entangled with many peripheries. Likewise at finding no center in Nietzsche's texts, ironic readers of Nietzsche are frustrated and are thus inclined to abandon any further reading or otherwise attempt to seek a satisfaction by taking one of the peripheries as a center. For ironic readers, reading is a story of irony, the story of the impossibility of reading. The binary opposition, between Dionysus and Apollo, Nietzsche and Socrates, and metaphor and irony, hinges upon the problem of reading.

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<sup>6</sup> Among many Nietzsche scholars who sees being as text, see Jean Granier, "Perspectivism and Interpretation," 192: "By introducing the notion of interpretation, Nietzsche imposes a definition of Being as 'text.' Being is similar to a text that requires our exegesis, a task complicated by the fact that the text is obscure, often full of gaps, by the fact that several 'readings' are possible and that certain fragments even remain undeciphered."



The question of how to read Nietzsche comes together with the question of how to see being, and these questions evolve around metaphor and irony. Therefore the study of metaphor and irony in Nietzsche has to begin with how to read him.<sup>7</sup>

In order to unravel this close and confusing interrelation of metaphor, irony, and reading, I will discuss and analyze Nietzsche's essay on language, "On Truth and Lying in an Extra-Moral Sense,"<sup>8</sup> which received much critical attention in the seventies and still attracts much critical debate.<sup>9</sup> Even though this essay, which was

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<sup>7</sup> In a chapter on Nietzsche in Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe, titled "Nietzsche: The Poetic Defense of History in the Metaphorical Mode," Hayden White discusses Nietzsche's historiography in terms of the metaphoric overcoming of irony. While observing that Nietzsche's 1871 preface to The Birth of Tragedy identifies the true targets of it as Socratic irony and Wagnerian Romanticism, White says, "Nietzsche's purpose as a philosopher was to transcend Irony by freeing consciousness from [reductionism and representation]...and to return consciousness to the enjoyment of its Metaphorical powers" (334). Even though he does not see the dynamic and mutually dependent relation between irony and metaphor, my approach to Nietzsche is quite similar to White's.

<sup>8</sup> In citing from or referring to Nietzsche's two texts, I have used the following abbreviations: TL for "On Truth and Lying in an Extra-Moral Sense," in Friedrich Nietzsche on Rhetoric and Language, and BT for The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music. And when I had to consult German texts, I used Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe, vol. I.

<sup>9</sup> See Paul de Man, "The Rhetoric of Trope," in his Allegories of Reading, J. P. Stern, "Nietzsche and the Idea of Metaphor," J. Hillis Miller, "Dismembering and

written in 1873, one year after The Birth of Tragedy, was not published during Nietzsche's lifetime, it is "probably the longest single piece on a traditional 'philosophical' subject he ever wrote."<sup>10</sup> It is in this essay that Nietzsche most coherently and most comprehensively reflects on his philosophy of language, though comments on language are scattered throughout all his major texts. But it is not certain whether or not Nietzsche's conception of metaphor and truth as delineated in this essay undergoes any change in his later writings.<sup>11</sup> However, my present

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Disremembering in Nietzsche's 'On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense'," and Lawrence M. Hinman, "Nietzsche, Metaphor, and Truth."

<sup>10</sup> J. P. Stern, "Nietzsche and the Idea of Metaphor," 66.

<sup>11</sup> As for the continuity of Nietzsche's view of language in "Truth and Lying" up to his later writings, see Alan D. Schrift's essay, "Language, Metaphor, Rhetoric: Nietzsche's Deconstruction of Epistemology." Schrift argues that "Nietzsche's early views on language, while no longer pursued as a specific topic of inquiry, remain a consistent theme throughout the entirety of his writings," and goes on to insist that "this conception of language [as metaphor] is essential for understanding some of Nietzsche's more vitriolic and polemical counterdoctrines to the traditional philosophical quest for knowledge and truth" (372). Maudemarie Clark objects to Schrift's interpretation of Nietzsche's philosophy of language, and claims that "Nietzsche later abandoned the position of 'Truth and Lying.'" Clark therefore sees that "Truth and Lying" "seems completely undeserving of the enthusiasm it has recently generated." See her Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy, 64.

The question of continuity of Nietzsche's view of language as metaphor in "Truth and Lying" does not concern my discussion of Nietzsche. In order not to be engaged or intrigued into a task of surveying all his writings, I limit my discussion of Nietzsche to The Birth of Tragedy

inquiry, being a study of metaphor in its relation to irony in Nietzsche's "Truth and Lying," does not concern itself with such a problem. After my discussion of it, I will move to The Birth of Tragedy, in order to explain irony and metaphor in terms of Dionysus, Apollo, and Socrates. For they throw light onto the problem of the hermeneutical interpretation of metaphors. In my discussion of metaphor in both texts, I neither intend to arrive at a new definition of metaphor nor to present a better approach to it than any traditional ones. What I attempt to investigate along with Nietzsche in these texts is rather to render metaphor more problematical and more

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and "Truth and Lying," his early writings. Dividing chronologically Nietzsche's work into three stages in his "Nietzsche: Art and Intellectual Inquiry," Peter Pütz sees that Nietzsche in his second phase is radically skeptical about art whereas he puts extraordinarily high value on art in his first phase. However, as my discussion of "Truth and Lying" will reveal, Nietzsche is not an unconditional patron of art. I say this not in order to contradict Pütz's useful guideline, but in order to indicate complexities involved. As a matter of fact, Nietzsche in his later writings, such as Will to Power and Twilight of the Idols, discards the notion of the thing-in-itself, which plays a significant role in "Truth and Lying" as a mysterious x, and as Dionysus in The Birth of Tragedy. For example, Nietzsche says "The 'apparent' world is the only one: the 'real' world has only been added as a lie" ("Reason in Philosophy" in Twilight of the Idols). And in the 1886 preface to The Birth of Tragedy, in this "essay in self-criticism," Nietzsche himself admits that he depended on Kantian and Schopenhauerian categories.

questionable, by considering it in its relation to irony, truth, and language in general.

## I

Throughout the essay Nietzsche distinguishes original truth from conventional truth and emphasizes the impossibility of attaining the former and on man's indifference to it: "He longs for the pleasant, life-preserving consequences of truth; he is indifferent to pure, inconsequential knowledge" (TL, p. 248). To begin with, original truth is defined as "'true in itself,' real, and universally valid, apart from man," (TL, p. 251) and as the "mysterious x of the thing,...that is inaccessible and indefinable for us" (TL, pp. 249-50). Since the thing for Nietzsche is in the continuous process of becoming, it cannot be represented or described. It is even a contradiction to call it a thing since it implies a stable entity. The only way to name it without such self-contradiction is to designate it by x, the unknowable and inaccessible. For Nietzsche to ask about truth after defining it as the pure knowledge of x is nothing more than to beg the question or a tautology at best: his definition of truth precludes any possibility of truth. However, even to designate x as x is not a pure knowledge, if the former x refers to the unknown reality. By designating a thing,

which is not a thing, as the unknown x, one has already committed an error of relating it to human understanding even in a form of negativity. To define it as the "inaccessible and indefinable" is an act of judgment and evaluation. And by replacing x (reality) by x (word), reality is taken as if it were a word and as if the word corresponded with the reality. It then follows that language begins only where reality ends. And if language has nothing to do with truth, then even Nietzsche's essay, regardless of what he says, cannot escape from that fatal falsity--not only false but also meaningless, because it says nothing at all.

In defining truth as the pure knowledge of the mysterious x of the thing, Nietzsche is concerned with the most fundamental of all fundamentals and the most original of all originals, which will support and found those less fundamental and less original. But since x is inaccessible and unknowable, the supposed foundation turns out to be an abyss into which all values are thrown and demolished.<sup>12</sup> As the x of curiosity, it invites men into a free inquiry and investigation only in order to frustrate them and dispossess them of what they have had and believed.

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<sup>12</sup> See Alphonso Lingis, "The Will to Power," at which he explains that "The Will to Power is an abyss, the groundless chaos beneath all the grounds, all the foundations, and it leaves the whole order of essences groundless" (7).

Therefore, the questioning of x is a gesture of ironic destruction: however serious an inquiry may be, it turns into a mode of self-destruction. Any inquiry into the mysterious x is destined to be ironic, the quest of impossibility, and Nietzsche in rendering truth as such an impossibility is ironic too. Like ironic Socrates, Nietzsche upholds the nothingness of ignorance or the perspective of nothingness, and destroys everything.

In a reflexive reading of Nietzsche, his rejection of truth is turned back upon himself and his essay is subjected to the same criticism. If truth is impossible, it means that any discourse is impossible and reading is impossible too. To say that nothing is true is not a safe position. Whenever one makes any statement, he is forced to deny its validity and, therefore, becomes necessarily ironic. There enters an inevitable incongruity or contradiction between what one says and what one means. Since reading cannot escape from that ironic situation, reading itself becomes a story of impossibility.

If original truth is inaccessible and indefinable and does not give rise to any discourse, human life will be threatened and endangered. For the sake of preservation of humanity, a more accessible and definable notion of truth has to be invented. Therefore the birth of truth for Nietzsche is necessarily social, conventional, and

anthropomorphic. Now truth is conceived not as a metaphysical correspondence between things and human knowledge of them, but as a consensus reached by humanity. Man sets up his own rules, principles, and truth, independent of the mysterious x, and plays according to them. For Nietzsche, this anthropomorphic truth, means "to use each dice as designated, count its spots accurately, forming the correct labels, and never violating the caste system and sequence of rank classifications" (TL, p. 251). According to this, truth is like a dice game and to be true is nothing more than to play in accordance with its rules. Only after rules of the dice game are decided upon, can one distinguish between truth and lying, truth as the correct use of dice and lying as the misuse of dice. The liar, Nietzsche says, "misuses established conventions by arbitrary substitutions and even reversals of names" (TL, p. 248). If society does not endure lying, it is because it will interrupt and destroy the play of the dice game. Since truth is neither ontological, nor epistemological, its significance lies in its engendering continuous play.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Of course, the notion of play does not have any subjective implication. For it is not the players but the very game itself that plays and is played, as Hans-Georg Gadamer clearly pointed out already. The rules of the game cannot be made or altered by any single individuals. In freeing play from the subjective meaning and seeing it in terms of middle voice phenomenon, Gadamer approaches Nietzsche's conception of play. Nietzsche's dice throw (a metaphor of eternal recurrence) and Dionysiac play resemble

As Nietzsche explains, "if someone hides an object behind a bush, then seeks and finds it there, that seeking and finding is not very laudable" because he finds only what he has posited already (TL, p. 251). Knowledge is simply the memory of the rules of games, and to be true is to keep these rules.

By conceiving truth as play, Nietzsche leaves irony behind himself and enters into a metaphoric mode. While original truth does not engender rules, making it impossible to play any game, conventional truth keeps games going on by continuously making rules.<sup>14</sup> But how does such a transition from irony to play, from absolute truth to conventional truth, from the impossibility of discourse to its proliferation, and from the impossibility of reading to its possibility take place? That transition, Nietzsche says, takes place through the medium of language, which has its origin in metaphor. He states that "the mysterious x of the thing appears first as a nerve stimulus, then as an

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Gadamer's notion of playing that is being played. Gadamer, Truth and Method, 91-119.

<sup>14</sup> For a brief explanation of the language game theory of truth, see Jean-François Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition, especially chapter 3. In a summary, he makes these three observations about language games: "The first is that their rules do not carry within themselves their own legitimation, but are the object of a contract, explicit or not, between players (which is not to say that the players invent the rules). The second is that if there are no rules, there is no game, ... [thirdly] every utterance should be thought of as a 'move' in a game" (10).



image, and finally as a sound" (TL, p. 249). Following Aristotle's definition of metaphor as "transference," Nietzsche explains: "First, he [man] translates a nerve stimulus into an image! That is the first metaphor. Then, the image must be reshaped into a sound! The second metaphor" (TL, p. 248). Through the process of metaphoric transference man enters into the world of language and of truth, while he drifts further and further away from the mysterious x. To speak more correctly, Nietzsche's metaphor here is catachresis, since the unknown x, which is not represented by any word, is replaced by a sign, which is not adequate to it.<sup>15</sup> Between the unknown x and a sign there is no appropriate relationship to speak of.

Nietzsche's metaphor in explaining the birth of language and truth, however, should not be confused with Aristotelian metaphor. While Nietzsche equates language with metaphor, Aristotle sees metaphor as only one of the tropes of language. For Aristotle, to understand and interpret metaphor mostly undoes metaphor and finds a proper meaning instead, which, Nietzsche sees, does not exist at all. Aristotle defines metaphor in terms of transference: "the transference may be from the genus to the species, from the species to the genus, or from one

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<sup>15</sup> Hillis Miller in "Dismembering and Disremembering in Nietzsche's 'On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense,'" 45.

species to another, or it may be a matter of analogy."<sup>16</sup> According to this transference theory of metaphor, there take place two transferences. On the level of metaphoric formation a term is carried away into another term, and then on the level of understanding the latter replaces and displaces the former. In the sentence "Odysseus has indeed performed ten thousand noble deeds," the metaphor "ten thousands," Aristotle explains, should be taken to mean "many." The metaphor "ten thousand" displaces the proper meaning "many," so that the latter has to displace the former. In other words, the reader of metaphor should leave the land of metaphor for the land of proper meaning in order to bring back the message of the latter to the former. Whenever there is metaphor, the reader has to be carried away into the proper meaning and then be carried back into the metaphoric expression with the proper message. For Aristotle, one-way transference is to be complemented by another counter-transference: the first transference "from the genus to the species, from the species to the genus, or from one species to another" is replaced by the second contrary transference. Even the case of metaphor by analogy and catachresis is no exception. Though a term, as in catachresis, is missing, there is a concept or an image to replace metaphor. Such

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<sup>16</sup> Aristotle, Poetics, 61.

two-way transference is the inevitable consequence of dualism of proper meaning and non-proper meaning, soul and body, and essence and matter. One is the temporary dwelling of man, the other the eternal dwelling. Therefore, the meaning of the former has to be found by referring to the latter. Aristotle's definition of metaphor as the two-way transference holds true only if one accepts the dualism of proper and non-proper meanings. The proper meaning is a home for a wandering metaphor to return to. But the question to be asked along with Nietzsche is: what if there is no home for metaphor to return to or what if the carrier, which carries metaphor away from its home, is lost forever so that homecoming is actually impossible? For Nietzsche, metaphor is a one-way transference, a one-way ticket into conventionality and language: "what we have [in language] are just metaphors of things, which do not correspond at all to the original entities" (TL, p. 249). As for Aristotle, metaphor, being a two-way ticket, carries the reader into the world of signs, and then carries him back to their proper home, to the world of things or of their images, so that the reader finds things in signs. But for Nietzsche, the metaphoric journey is an eternal departure from the world of reality without any hope to return. If the metaphor is by way of analogy (A is to B as C is to D), one term (D) is missing and remains as a void.

The other terms in that analogy therefore lose their ground and foundation. If metaphor operates by transference, a term to be transferred, that is, the mysterious x, cannot be represented at all and does not give rise to any image or idea which will in turn found metaphor. In the absence of proper meanings, there is only endless repetition of metaphors. The reader of a metaphor is destined to be lost in the forest of metaphors.

Since language is a one-way ticket into wandering and meandering, its player resides and plays not in a safe world of metaphysical presence, but in a dangerous and aberrant world of absence. To enter into language is not to walk on a pathway leading to a fixed destination (Aristotle's proper meaning), but to wander and to be lost in a thick forest of metaphors. With Nietzsche's description of language and metaphor as a one-way transference, the linguistic journey becomes an adventure with a risk of no return. Every adventure, however dangerous, is undertaken with an imperative request of returning home, in order to complete its genetic cycle of departure and homecoming. Likewise, one leaves the world of things in the play of language only in order to return to it. Therefore, the moment one enters into language, in either speaking or reading, one is already ready to return. As for the reader, especially of Nietzsche, he finds

himself resisting reading, being afraid that he might be lost. The initial temptation of reading turns soon into the resistance to reading--such a dual moment constitutes the very essence of language.<sup>17</sup>

Nietzsche, however, does not see the danger and risk of metaphor negatively, but on the contrary he takes it rather as a positive element of language, not only in that metaphor sets in motion the play of language and therefore truth, but also in that it bears certain signs of materiality.<sup>18</sup> Even though he rendered metaphor as something that has nothing to do with reality in his strong rejection of any fundamental truth, he begins to affirm that it is not an absolute severing from reality. But the relation between metaphor and reality cannot be theoretically identified and is not a matter of pure confirmation or negation, for his defense of metaphor is

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<sup>17</sup> See Paul de Man's well known essay, "The Resistance to Theory," in The Resistance to Theory.

<sup>18</sup> As the following discussion will prove, it is not quite correct for Hillis Miller to say that Nietzsche condemned metaphor in "Truth and Lying" in order to ask "Why is it that Nietzsche must use what he condemns?" Miller's answer to that question is derived from what might be called a practical consideration, that is, "Nietzsche's task...is to use metaphors...in such a way as to reveal clearly the functioning of metaphors." Rather than arguing against his answer, I would like to point out that his answer does not do justice to Nietzsche's defense of metaphor as the product of will to power, and a way of overcoming irony. See Hillis Miller, "Dismembering and Disremembering in Nietzsche's 'On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense,'" 46.

partly the result of or a strategy for his stringent attack of concepts. In "Truth and Lying," Nietzsche explains the creation of metaphor in terms of anthropomorphism, man's desire for relation with the thing-in-itself which is totally incomprehensible. Since it is impossible to perceive thing-in-itself, "he [man] designates only the relations of things to men, and to express these relations he uses the boldest metaphors" (TL, p. 248). Of course, it does not mean that before the creation of metaphors man is not related to things in any way. Nietzsche's definition of "the first metaphor" as the translation of "a nerve stimulus into an image" implies that man has encountered and has been attacked by things in a way of vague and indistinct nerve stimulation. It seems to be certain that Nietzsche admits the actual relation, which is not cognitive, between prelinguistic man and reality, though by doing so he falls into a dualism of feeling and knowing.

In the instance of the first metaphor, the fact that man translates a nerve stimulus into an image means that he turns a feeling into a pictorial memory, thus making reality representable. When a thing hits a man and he feels its impact, he begins to translate or interpret the thing in terms of the impact. And he mistakes the impact

as if it were the thing itself.<sup>19</sup> As a result of this mistaken impression, he gains an image of the thing. If it were not man but another animal that is hit by the thing, its image, Nietzsche supposes, would have been quite different.<sup>20</sup> Because the specific image of the thing pertains particularly to man, Nietzsche calls it an instance of anthropomorphism, the humanization of the world. Nonetheless, that anthropomorphism is constituted by man's tactile relation to the thing. The relation is not intellectual, but of something pertaining to the body, and the creation of the first metaphor is initiated and is mediated by the body. As such, what severs the first metaphor from the thing is not the actual abyss between them, but the theoretical abyss of uncertainty, unpredictability, and multiplicity which characterized the body. When one attempts a theoretical definition of the relation between the first metaphor and the thing, the

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<sup>19</sup> See Nietzsche's critique of cause-and-effect relation in The Will to Power, § 229: "If he is suffering or in a good mood, he has no doubt that he can find the reason for it if only he looks. So he looks for the reason--In truth, he cannot find the reason, because he does not even suspect where he ought to look for it--What happens?--He takes a consequence of his condition for its cause." For Nietzsche's metaphoric deconstruction of epistemology, see Alan D. Schrift, "Language, Metaphor, Rhetoric: Nietzsche's Deconstruction of Epistemology."

<sup>20</sup> Quite ironically, Nietzsche himself hypothesizes, "if we had ... a varying sensory perception, we could see now like a bird, now like a worm, now like a plant" (TL, p. 253).

abyss opens up and separates one from the other as if they had nothing to do with each other. The relation between them resists any theorizing, any conceptualization, since it remains unstable, unpredictable, and undependable.

Nietzsche's notion of language is therefore not to be misunderstood as another version of Saussure's linguistics. While Saussure sees the connection between signs and their referents as arbitrary, Nietzsche finds a certain natural relation between them. Even though Nietzsche sometimes presents their relation as arbitrary because of its impossibility of definition, it is not certainly a Saussure's arbitrariness. Saussure, in order to found a rigorous study of language, separates the fact of speaking, parole, from the rule and system of language, langue, and takes the latter as the proper domain of linguistics, because parole resists any rules and principles. Therefore, the science of language as the system of unmotivated and arbitrary signs has to defend itself from the threat of certain unruly "paroles," and from the threat of certain motivated signs like onomatopoeia and interjections. Saussure considers a possibility of motivation in onomatopoeia only in order to renounce it as an exception on the ground that "onomatopoeic formations are never organic elements of a linguistic system" and "their number is much smaller than is generally supposed."



For Saussure, not only are onomatopoeic words exceptional and non-organic, they undergo a transformation and lose "their original character in order to assume that of the linguistic sign in general, which is unmotivated."<sup>21</sup> As such, there is enough reason for Saussure to ignore some element of semiotic motivation, the admission of which would thwart an attempt to study language as a rigorous science.

But for Nietzsche, a certain element of semiotic motivation, which is repudiated by Saussure as an exception, becomes the very cornerstone of his discussion of language, the cornerstone which shakes and unsettles the system of language from the bottom. If language is totally arbitrary and unmotivated, it can be shaped into any system of linguistic totality, since language is nothing and thus is unable to resist a system. But if language is endowed with a certain motivation, it is resistant to such a systematic totalization. It is this aspect of linguistic resistance that defines Nietzsche's position against Saussure's and makes Nietzsche attribute the origin of language to metaphor. For Nietzsche, the metaphoricity of language is rather a positive, since it saves language from a total arbitrariness and restores language to its relation

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<sup>21</sup> Ferdinand de Saussure, Course in General Linguistics, 69.

to things. But to those who see language as a system of totality and are concerned with theorizing language, the metaphoric origin of language takes a negative and deconstructive implication: metaphor renders the system of language quite arbitrary.

Since language in its metaphoricity is unstable in relation to reality, and cannot be contained safely in a system, language for Nietzsche is destined to be an unreliable one-way transference into wandering. When a nerve stimulus is translated into an image, which is the first metaphor, this metaphoric process cannot be reversed. Even though the image bears a certain aspect of the nerve stimulus, it is too vague and indistinct to identify its own source. Granted that the identification is possible, the nerve stimulus, the locus of the body, does not lead it into a further final source, the thing which produced the stimulus. Nietzsche explains that "to conclude from a nerve stimulus to a cause outside ourselves is already the result of a false and unjustified application of the law of causality" (TL, p. 248). Therefore, any attempt to reconstruct the thing out of the image through the retrogressive movement cannot be successful. Though one leaves things in the act of creating language, he cannot hope to return to them: to use language is thus to wander in a foreign land, and its speaker is an exile there.

However, man cannot endure the status of exile, so he decides to be naturalized in a foreign land, by completely forgetting his own homeland. That naturalization is the transformation of metaphor into concepts. The fact that man resists the materiality of metaphor gives rise to the birth of non-metaphoric and proper meanings as in Aristotle and Hegel. In order to explain Nietzsche's attitude to this conceptualizing process of metaphor, I will discuss for a moment Hegel's semiology, and then I will show how this is opposed to Nietzsche's position.

Contrary to Saussure but in agreement with Nietzsche, Hegel holds language as motivated by reality. As Kojève explains with the example of "dog," language is created in conjunction with the real "dog" through the mediation of time.<sup>22</sup> The real dog, Hegel sees, dies in time, in order to be reborn in language. Here the image and memory of the real dog gives rise to the word "dog," and the relation between them is the universally motivated and necessary one, that is prepared by the teleological scheme of time. The word "dog" for Hegel is truth and the birth of language is the realization of truth. The real dog corresponds to the word "dog," of course with the difference that one is given in temporality and the other in eternity. According

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<sup>22</sup> Alexandre Kojève, Introduction to the Reading of Hegel, 141-43.

to Hegel, man loses reality in language but attains truth. The loss of reality is recompensed more than enough by the gain of truth: one leaves spatiality behind and gains instead concept, one leaves a temporal home for an eternal home. As for Hegel, the natural relation of language to reality provides a solid and true foundation to the system of language: language is motivated and necessary not only in its origin but also in its system. In that teleological and universal system of language, man's passage into language (metaphor) is also the passage into truth (its proper meaning).

While Hegel sees the transformation of language into concepts as an ascent, Nietzsche finds in it a descent. The transcendence of language into concept for Nietzsche is nothing more than forgetting of its origin; as he says, "only by forgetfulness can man ever come to believe that he has truth..." (TL, p. 248). Hegel's truth, Nietzsche sees, is "just what is left over as the residue of a metaphor" (TL, p. 251). Then the concept is the ungrateful child who forgets those who gave birth to him. From the viewpoint of Nietzsche, Hegel's concept like the child forgets its origin and in order to justify its second birth attributes to itself a wrong origin. The conceptualization of metaphor is then a double forgetting, firstly forgetting of its origin and then forgetting of the fact of its oblivion.

What is considered proper in metaphor in Aristotle and Hegel is nothing other than that which is wrongly imposed on metaphor. And if they see metaphor as the two-way transference, the supposed second transference into the proper meaning is rather a transference away from it. Quite against their intention to save metaphor from Nietzschean wandering, they happen to attach to it a false identity, a false home, and false parents: by finding wrong parents in the concept, metaphor puts an end to its search for real parents. Because of this finding relief in wrong identification, Nietzsche condemns concepts, and his apparent valorization of metaphor is no other expression than his warning against conceptualization as the forgetting of metaphor.

Nietzsche's valorization of metaphor against concept therefore leads him to render the latter as the slow process of forgetting or wearing-away of the former. In explaining such a slow conceptualizing process, Nietzsche, for example, uses a "coin" metaphor: "truths are ... worn-out metaphors without sensory impact, coins which have lost their image and now can be used only as metal, and no longer as coins" (TL, p. 250). This coin metaphor, as Stern rightly points out in his reading of "Truth and Lying," has the apocalyptic implication that the history of language is "a process which runs all the way from pristine

freshness to ossification, decadence, and an apocalyptic ending."<sup>23</sup> But one should be warned against taking too literally such an apocalyptic tone in Nietzsche's coin metaphor. For that wearing-away of the coin is not the transition from the presence of being to its absence. The coin is not a metaphor of the thing, but a metaphor of metaphor. If the coin is an image, it is the image of metaphor as exergue, which gains value only by wearing-away. The image is already false. Therefore what concerns Nietzsche in the coin metaphor is not the forgetting of truth or of the presence of Being, but the forgetting of falsity. As such, his coin metaphor has a function of undermining the Hegelian uplifting of metaphor into truth: Nietzsche plainly states that "truths are illusions about which it has been forgotten that they are illusions" (TL, p. 250). Hegelian truth for Nietzsche is only the absence and forgetting of the metaphoricity of metaphor. And if Nietzsche gives any ontological priority to metaphor against concept, it seems to be because the former corresponds more closely to the status of things in its

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<sup>23</sup> See J. P. Stern, "Nietzsche and the Idea of Metaphor," 72. Stern asserts that such a declining process is "the way Nietzsche saw European history from the golden age of pre-Socratic Greece to his own day and the early twentieth century as he prophetically envisaged it."

negativity, that is, in its absence of systematic order, its negation of any claim to truth, and so on.

Nietzsche's metaphor is no doubt not a mere trope within the system of language, but language itself. As Nietzsche uses the word "truth" dually in "Truth and Lying" without defining clearly its duplicity, that is, original truth and linguistic truth, his use of metaphor is to be understood in that context. Whenever he talks about metaphor, it is meant to be original metaphor (language itself) as distinct from rhetorical metaphor (a trope in language). And as the impossibility of original truth gives rise to the birth of rhetorical truth, original metaphor produces rhetorical metaphor. If language, as Nietzsche says, "works at the structure of concepts," linguistic metaphor is defined in its relation to concepts. For Aristotle, this linguistic metaphor is a linguistic deviation, which therefore should be translated into the proper concept. It is only by its self-denial and undoing of itself that metaphor enters into the structure of concepts. But for Nietzsche, even rhetorical metaphor is not to be translated into the concept. As he says in the last section in the essay, rhetorical metaphor should be used creatively, that is, in a way of destroying the rigid system of concepts which he compares with "a prison fortress" (TL, p. 254). As man is entrapped and imprisoned

within and by the system of language, which he created for his life preservation and out of creativity and freedom, language becomes a supreme danger.

If language does not have any ontological foundation, it is not safe to play with it, most of all when unaware that one is playing. To place one's trust in language in order to be led into truth is nothing more than to be deceived into "the presuppositions of metaphysics of language," as Nietzsche says in Twilight of the Idols, where comparing language to "a deceitful old woman."<sup>24</sup> As the old woman is unpredictable, unbelievable, and untruthful, so is with language. As it is dangerous to take her as a woman of faith and truth, so it is with language. If one sees words as true to things and tries to find concepts in words, he is destined to be deceived and deluded by them. Here lies the danger for the players of the language game. While man has no choice but to use language, he cannot trust it. His relation with language is a battle at which the latter tries to catch, imprisons, and finally enslaves him, while he wants to use it to the best of his creative impulse. In explaining the human relation to language, Nietzsche therefore sets "the poor

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<sup>24</sup> Nietzsche writes, "'Reason' in language: oh what a deceitful old woman! I fear we are not getting rid of God because we still believe in grammar." See Twilight of the Idols, p. 38.



man" against "the liberated intellect": language, "to which the poor man clings for dear life, is for the liberated intellect just a scaffolding and plaything for his boldest artifices" (255).

Nietzsche's discussion of the creative use of metaphor is based on his conviction that the drive to form metaphors is the "fundamental desire in man." That fundamental desire, Nietzsche sees, "cannot be discounted for one moment, because that would amount to ignoring man himself" (254). As such, man is defined in terms of his metaphoric desire. Though Nietzsche gives such an enormously important function to metaphor, it is not very certain whether he means by it rhetorical metaphor (a trope) or original metaphor (language itself). If he means by metaphor language in general, his emphasis would be commonsensical. However, it may be that the distinction cannot be made too rigid, and that there is a certain continuity between them. Even though metaphor as trope is the product of conceptualization of original metaphor and thus given within the system of conceptual language, it can be the most tangible residue of original metaphor, thereby resisting Aristotelian transference into concept. Then metaphor as trope, instead of being transported into the concept, is transported back to the original metaphor.

Transference of metaphor is not a forward movement as in Hegel, but a backward movement.

As man in creating language turns the impossibility of speaking into its possibility, so does he in forming metaphor overcome the rigid and imprisoning structure of concepts. If in creating language man subdued the irony of thinking and of truth, in forming metaphor man pushes language back into irony, and embraces voluntarily the impossibility of finding truth. While the original metaphor is positive in setting into motion human desire for truth, rhetorical metaphor is negative in its frustrating and upsetting that desire. In spite of the fact they operate quite contrary to each other, their continuity is derived from their relation to irony: a system of language, which is created out of the forgetting of the ironicity of truth, is destroyed by the hands of irony itself, which form metaphor.

## II

In his attempt to use metaphor in destroying concepts, Nietzsche creates many binary oppositions in order to valorize one set of them. The opposition of metaphor and concept in Nietzsche corresponds to the opposition of a non-system and a system, freedom and need, and art (or myth) and science. While the second set of opposition is

concerned with founding a system, a shelter for living in safety, the first one feels constrained within a system and therefore is forced to break out of it. Although man needs shelter, he also wants to breathe fresh air. If one is necessity, the other is freedom. Whereas man builds the system of concepts out of necessity for living, he at the same time overthrows that system out of his impulse for freedom. And now Nietzsche relates the system of concepts to the two modes of life, dreaming and awakening, and shows that they are distinguished from each other by either the absence or the presence of the system. "The wideawake person," Nietzsche says, "is certain that he is awake only because of the rigidly regular web of concepts, and so he sometimes comes to believe that he is dreaming when at times that web of concepts is torn apart by art" (254). If such a distinction between waking and dreaming solely depends on the system of concepts, the distinction itself could be undone and reversed, since the system does not have any ontological foundation. The distinction between day and night for Nietzsche depends on intensity, will power, strong passion, and excitation. According to that new standard, a wideawake person of concepts can be no other than a dreamer, since his life lacks intensity and passion, though full of security and comfort. However, this does not mean that Nietzsche reverses the hierarchy of

day and night, or of waking and dreaming. For Nietzsche, life in its intensity and strength is on the side of dream, and therefore the conceptually awakened life of "the scientifically sober thinker" should be intensified and strengthened into the status of Apollonian dream as in the ancient Greeks. And as such an intensification of life can be achieved only through undoing the system of concepts, Nietzsche gives a special role to metaphor for that task, metaphor as a means of destroying conceptual orders.

The function of metaphor for Nietzsche lies in its willful and voluntary confusion of "the categories and cells of concepts by presenting new transference" (254). For example, one can call "the river a moving road that carries man to where he otherwise walks" (255). The metaphor in this example is constructed out of conceptual mistake: the concept "river" is confused with another concept "road." Such an example of conceptual or categorical mistake can be multiplied: the ancient Greeks, Nietzsche illustrates, see a tree as a nymph, a bull as a god, and so on.<sup>25</sup> Nietzsche celebrates the metaphoric destruction of concepts and categories and finds its

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<sup>25</sup> For a definition of metaphor as a category mistake (an object ordinarily belonging to one category is presented as belonging to another category), see Gilbert Ryle, The Concept of Mind. Nelson Goodman also sees metaphor as "a calculated category mistake," "a transfer of a schema, a migration of concepts, an alienation of categories." See his Languages of Art, 73.

justification from "the world of dreams," which is devoid of the system of conceptual differentiation, and is therefore capable of unsettling and destroying all conceptual fixities.<sup>26</sup> Thus Nietzsche is able to say that in the world of dreams or in forming metaphors "anything is possible, and all nature crowds around man as if it were only the masquerade of the gods, who only make a joke of deceiving man in all forms" (TL, p. 255). As the creator of "the boldest metaphors," man, according to Nietzsche, can say anything whatsoever and can designate any names to things, without being bound to the system of language. As I will explain later, these boldest metaphors bring about the problem of understanding and interpretation. However, not concerned with such an interpretative problem, Nietzsche presents this metaphoric liberation vividly by comparing a liberated metaphor to "a servant" whose master is absent, and thereby being a master himself. In a way that a servant can do whatever pleases himself during the

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<sup>26</sup> It is in this respect that Nietzsche's metaphors are quite similar to Freud's dream language. For Freud, the defense mechanism of consciousness, which conceptualizes and categorizes reality according to the conventional system of concepts, plays the role of protecting man from the impact or shock of reality. But during the sleep and dream, the defense mechanism loses its control so that some elements of bare experiences, which are suppressed while man is awake, are given a free reign. Where Nietzsche sees the transference of metaphors into concepts, Freud finds the suppression of experience by consciousness.

absence of his master, man wields the unlimited power of forming new metaphors, since there are no categories or concepts to limit his metaphoric desire.

In Nietzsche's giving free rein to man's drive to form metaphors, it is certain that he does not concern himself with the hermeneutical problem of understanding or interpretation. For in spite of its apparent attraction, the metaphoric destruction of concepts brings about a serious consequence, that is, the impossibility of the language game itself. When one calls the river a moving road or a tree a nymph, the new metaphors are not meant to replace old concepts. It is because once a metaphor takes the place of a concept, the metaphor is not metaphor any more, but instead becomes a concept which should be destroyed by another metaphor. If a metaphor is to remain as metaphor, it should be replaced by another metaphor which is to be replaced by another. Then there is only an endless play of replacements in metaphor. The difficulty of translation means the impasse of any true interpretation, and as a result the play of language is suspended. Even though one is free to call a tree a nymph, he cannot make it understood by others unless the metaphor "nymph" is allowed to find its proper meaning in "tree." To put it another way, one is free to destroy categories

and concepts by metaphorically confusing them voluntarily, but he cannot make his new metaphors accepted by others. The impossibility of the language game itself in the endless replacements of metaphors then naturally requires another conception of a language game which is not dependent on the system of concepts.

Confronted with the threat of the impossibility of language itself, we might well ask whether there is any positive ground for forming metaphors. If man's drive to form metaphors is not supported by any positive ground, the drive seems to be self-destructive. Here we certainly don't want to repeat the whole thing again, that is, Nietzsche's rendition of the first and the second metaphors and their relation to things. As I have discussed already, the positive ground in forming metaphors is located in the body, in its receiving a certain nerve stimulation. However, that nerve stimulation can be represented in no way and therefore cannot give rise to any language. A nerve stimulation should be carried over into an image, then to a sound, and finally a word. Such a metaphoric process is nothing more than a slow process of forgetting metaphoricity. For example, if one hears a word not as a word, but as a sound, one cannot enter into any human communication. In order that one realizes his drive to form metaphors, it is required as a precondition that he

should be in the world of words, not of mere sounds. And words are words only when they are given in the system of language, since otherwise they are mere sounds. When all this is considered, Nietzsche's endeavor to turn concepts into metaphors seems to be self-defeating. Even when he insists that man in forming metaphors is "guided not by concepts but by intuitions," his defense of metaphor has such an element of self-destruction. For "the word is not made for these intuitions; man falls silent when he sees them, or he speaks in sheer forbidden metaphors and unheard of conceptual compounds" (TL, pp. 155-56). Granted that man is led by intuitions, he has no way to express them, and if he does, it is nothing more than a mere sound that does not make any sense. As such, Nietzsche's term, "intuitive metaphors" [Anschauungsmetapher], is a self-contradiction.

Nietzsche's valorization of metaphor then cannot be taken seriously, since he affirms it only insofar as it functions as a means for destroying the system of concepts. Once metaphor fulfills its designated task, it is to be discarded. But on the other hand this rejection cannot be pushed to the degree of its annihilation. For "that would amount to ignoring man himself." Thus Nietzsche can neither praise nor condemn metaphor. However, this impossible position of Nietzsche regarding metaphor is the



one that grows naturally out of his conception of language as metaphor. Language is at once arbitrary and motivated, and self-reflective and referential. Because of the simultaneous coexistence of positivity and negativity in language's relation to reality, one cannot take a definitive position in regard to either language or metaphor. If one takes a decisive position as in the cases of Hegel and Saussure, it is only through ignoring such an undecidable duality of language. As for Nietzsche, he does justice to that undecidable dimension of language, and exactly by doing so he finds himself unable to take a position. While he condemns metaphor, he is forced to praise it. And while he praises it, he is forced to condemn it. Therefore, whatever statements he makes, they are destined to be undermined. Then the problem of language is the problem of writing. If one is doomed to undermine his own statements at the moment of making them, how can he hope to go on writing? Of course, that is also the problem of forming metaphors without fixing them into concepts. In a way that a metaphor is to be replaced by another in an endless process of repetition, writing is a blind repetition of a saying and undoing it. For one says something only insofar as this saying is undermined by another saying. Here we are tempted to ask, "what then is the destination or purpose of metaphor and writing?"

In order to situate more concretely the question concerning the destination of metaphors and writing, I will examine the rhetorical or stylistic elements of "Truth and Lying". The essay begins with a parable ("In some remote corner of the universe...there once was a star ...") and ends with creating a set of opposition between "the rational man and the intuitive man" which repeats previous sets of opposition such as concepts and metaphors. That opening parable of the essay runs as follows: on the star "clever animals invented knowledge. That was the most arrogant and the most untruthful moment in 'world history'--yet indeed a moment." In its opposing knowledge to truth, this parable in itself sets a certain direction to Nietzsche's later formulation of many binary oppositions. While putting the opposition in a form of parable which does not require any verification or proof of its narrative, Nietzsche is free to make the judgement that knowledge is untruthful. After basing the tone of his narrative on parable, Nietzsche seeks to illustrate the meaning of parable: "Someone could invent such a fable and still not have illustrated adequately how pitiful, how shadowy and fleeting, how purposeless and arbitrary the human intellect appears within nature" (TL, p. 246). After making such an unproved statement about the human

intellect, Nietzsche makes the purpose of his essay to illustrate its meaning.

The opening of the essay sets up the rhetorical procedure of the essay. It starts with a parable, which gives rise to a rhetorical statement about the human intellect, which in turn is taken for granted by the author, who is in doubt whether others understand the truth of the statement, therefore, the demonstration of which becomes the task of his essay. With that purpose in mind, Nietzsche goes on to assert that "the intellect, as a means of preserving the individual, develops its main power in dissimulation" and has nothing to do with truth (TL, 246-47). As a master of dissimulation (as the rhetorical opening of the essay demonstrates), man develops his linguistic dissimulation into truth by transferring a nerve stimulus into an image, a sound, and then a concept. While metaphors become concepts, dissimulation is transcended into truth. The human intellect sets into motion all these acts of brilliant transformation, and as a result happens to produce all binary oppositions, such as that between intuition and reason, the thing and its image, metaphor and concept, art and science, and finally the intuitive man and the rational man. As we have already discussed, Nietzsche seems to valorize the first set of opposition, but he is unable to dismiss the other. On the one hand, these binary

terms of opposition are produced as the consequence of the intellectual dissimulation, and as such they are to be taken not as rigid concepts but as metaphors. If they are problematic, they are pseudo-problems.<sup>27</sup> On the other, the intellect, which is responsible for the production of these pseudo-problems, cannot be blamed, since life is preserved only by its power in dissimulation. Nietzsche therefore is unable to either praise or condemn not only the intellect, but the system of concepts and reason as well. However, his theoretical or thematic impasse regarding these binary oppositions does not necessarily mean he is in a practical or rhetorical impasse. In his discussion of the system of concepts, Nietzsche compares it to "a prison fortress." If rhetoric can be defined as the art of persuasion, the metaphor, a prison fortress, dissuades the reader from the system of concepts, though the metaphor does not add anything to the theoretical dimension of the problem. However, it is by adopting such rhetorical strategies that Nietzsche can disentangle himself from the theoretical impasse of deciding between concept and metaphor, and can unravel the complexities of the issues.

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<sup>27</sup> Pseudo-problems are those which simply arise out of the "confusion between facts and the abstractions by which we describe them." See Stephen Karin, The Misuse of Mind, 71.

His rhetorical strategies seem to be demanded from the very nature of the intellect as a way out of the theoretical impasse. Since it is impossible to attain truth, the intellect has to resort to its power of dissimulation in order to invent conventional truths. Thus the dissimulation on the level of the intellect corresponds with the rhetorical strategies on the level of writing. And both are motivated by the impossibility of attaining truth. While he acknowledges the necessity of dissimulation [Verstellung], Nietzsche however distinguishes it from distortion [Verzerrung]. The former is the company of metaphor, art, and the intuitive man, whereas the latter is that of concept, science, and the rational man. Man's dissimulation becomes distortion when metaphors become concepts and are fixed within their system. Likewise the artist becomes the philosopher, when the former begins to be theoretical and systematic. In German the difference between dissimulation and distortion becomes more apparent and more contrasted: Verstellung means "adjusting," and "disguise," while Verzerrung implies "contortion," and "grimace." The intellect adjusts itself to reality by the art of dissimulation, which however is developed into distortion, when its adjustment is oriented toward rules and principles: in an attempt to adjust itself to a preset standard, the body sometimes has to be twisted,

and contorted out of its usual form. Therefore, the man, given in the rigidly regular web of concepts, feels constrained and often makes a grimace. Instead of wandering in disguises in their forbidden paths into their parents, metaphors can end their wandering by identifying themselves with false parents in concepts.

However, Nietzsche's distinction between dissimulation and distortion does not resolve our problem of language. Though he approves dissimulation against distortion, it is found that Nietzsche does not take its necessary consequence, that is, the priority of the intuitive man over the rational man. Quite contrary to our expectation, they are presented in equal terms without preferential distinction.

There are ages in which the rational man and the intuitive man stand side by side, one in fear of intuition, the other with mockery for abstraction; the latter being just as unreasonable as the former is unartistic. Both desire to master life; the one by managing to meet his main needs with foresight, prudence, reliability; the other, as in 'overjoyous' hero, by not seeing those needs and considering only life, disguised as illusion and beauty, to be real (TL, p. 256).

Now Nietzsche's rhetorical preference of the intuitive man as in his discussion of dissimulation cannot be found here. No matter which of them one takes, one has to be ready to embrace the same amount of loss. While the rational man is protected from misfortunes by means of concepts and is thus free from pain, he is evidently not happy. On the other

hand, the intuitive man, though he is overjoyous, "suffers more violently" and "more often." And he is unable to learn any lesson from his experiences, since they are not conceptualized. Regardless of one's choice, it is destined to be neither satisfactory nor consoling. When he describes metaphor and concept most concretely and pictorially in terms of the two types of men, and when he therefore has to defend one of them as he does in his discussion of dissimulation and distortion, Nietzsche refuses and forsakes his gesture of rhetorical valorization. What happens to Nietzsche, who has praised metaphors and condemned the system of concepts with rhetorical strategies?

However, at this point at which Nietzsche dispenses with his rhetorical affirmation on which he has relied until now, the question arises as to the nature of his description of the rational man and the intuitive man. Does Nietzsche shift from a rhetorical dimension to an ethical one? Within the compass of "Truth and Lying" this seems to be very probable. Though Nietzsche is inclined rhetorically toward metaphors against concepts, he cannot theoretically justify or defend his inclination. But this probability is not a very convincing one, especially because Nietzsche's intuitive man in "Truth and Lying" is the very description of Dionysiac man in The Birth of

Tragedy. And the rational man in "Truth and Lying" seems to be Socrates, the theoretical man in The Birth of Tragedy. For this reason I will attempt to answer Nietzsche's position regarding metaphor and concept by turning to another text, The Birth of Tragedy. My discussion of The Birth of Tragedy is motivated by the proposition that the opposition between Dionysus and Apollo would provide a better paradigm of explaining the phenomenon of metaphor than the opposition between metaphor and concept. Since he narrates The Birth of Tragedy in the form of myth, Nietzsche, I think, may develop his discussion of language and metaphor without being himself too much theoretically involved. And if Nietzsche in the end of "Truth and Lying" stares indifferently at the undecidable impasse between metaphor and concept, his staring may be not into the abyss which is open between them, but into a mythical bridge unifying them, whose domain is the early Greek world. Therefore, when Nietzsche gives up the rhetorical valorization of metaphor, it may be not because of a theoretical consideration--that is, in destroying the system of concepts by metaphor, he would bring about the very impossibility of language--but because



of his mythical vision that man can speak with metaphors even in the absence of that system of concepts.<sup>28</sup>

### III

Though The Birth of Tragedy is a genealogical study of the rise and fall of Greek tragedy, it is at the same time

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<sup>28</sup> In my discussion of "myth" in Nietzsche's The Birth of Tragedy, I will attempt to disclose its ironic or discursive nature. Nietzsche's relation to Greek myth is ironic in that he has to be outside the myth historically, culturally, and factually in order that he is to be inside the myth on the level of discourse. If Nietzsche were to live within the myth which he longed for, like one of Dionysus revellers he would be in its possession and would be part of the totality that constitutes the myth, thus not being individualized away from it into a thinking individual. As such, the fact that he is within the myth does not allow him to recognize or understand it: the mythical totality does not permit any penetration into its nature and when it is penetrated it is not myth any more. In order that one is to talk about myth and its signification, one is supposed to be outside its force. Otherwise, myth cannot enter into discourse. Discourse of myth presupposes its disappearance and loss, and it is therefore destined to be only hypothetical. Nietzsche's account of Greek myth is not so much historical as discursive and not so much mythical as mythopoetic; the factual absence of myth generates its discursive presence. In Nietzsche's thinking, myth is a hypothetical form of totality, which gives unity to his fragmentary thinking and writing and thus saves them from a doomed fragmentation. As such, Nietzsche's myth resembles Lévi-Strauss' concept "engineer," which he uses in The Savage Mind in order to represent a certain hypothetical unity and totality of the fragmentary "bricolage." And for an excellent account of the contradictory nature of Nietzsche's relation to Greek myth, see Peter Pütz, "Nietzsche: Art and Intellectual Inquiry." And also for a view to see Nietzsche's myth as "an illusion to which we submit while still knowing it to be mere illusion," thus being an artistic phenomenon, see Benjamin Bennett, "Nietzsche's Idea of Myth: The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics," 422.

an inquiry into how reality gives rise to music, language, and representation. While the transference of reality into representation in "Truth and Lying" is explained in terms of metaphor, the same process in The Birth of Tragedy is discussed in the mythical horizon of Dionysus and Apollo. "The mysterious x of the thing," which remains anonymous in "Truth and Lying", appears with the divine name of Dionysus. Though Nietzsche borrows that name from Greek mythology, he interprets Dionysus not as one of the gods, but as the god of all gods, and the unity of all beings. As such, he affirms all facts of life, and is beyond all individuation and differentiation. In rendering Dionysus as the origin of all origins, the problem that Nietzsche has to encounter and resolve is how this primordial being is related to other beings, and how it enters into the realm of phenomenal experience.<sup>29</sup> His attempt to answer

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<sup>29</sup> My discussion of Dionysus is concerned not so much with its original oneness as with its phenomenal appearances. In other words, my discussion is limited to the state of man's relation (Apollonian or Socratic) to Dionysus after the former's separation from the latter. Before nature's (Dionysus') "fragmentation" and "her decomposition into separate individuals," man was one with nature, and was not differentiated from nature (BT, p. 27). In that state of man's original oneness with Dionysus there was no subject-object division and therefore man, being himself nature, was not conscious of nature as object. But this collective oneness with Dionysus has to be broken, not only because of the Apollonian principle of individuation, but also because Dionysus is doomed to be dismembered and individualized as in Greek mythology (see section 10). After this separation man is seized with a strong desire to "sink back into the original oneness of nature" which he

this problem is an introduction of another deity, Apollo, the god of individuation as well as the god of appearance and illusion. Since Dionysus as the totality of all beings and the origin of all phenomena cannot appear as it is, it can appear phenomenally only by taking an Apollonian form of illusion and individuation. The phenomenal appearance of Dionysus is nothing more than the distortion and dissimulation of its own totality and oneness. Then Dionysus has to destroy Apollonian individuation in order

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can experience only through intoxication and forgetting of his individuality. Therefore whether before or after separation, man's union with Dionysus never gives rise to any verbal representation. Even granted that man in the moment of original oneness with Dionysus is in the presence of truth, his experience is not given in the mode of knowledge or perception, since he does not enter into original oneness unless he is intoxicated and forgets himself. And when he is awakened from intoxication, he does not remember what he has experienced. Though Dionysus is truth, he is at the same time the impossibility of truth. Therefore, Nietzsche in the later preface of 1886 has to admit that The Birth of Tragedy is "an impossible book," "built from precocious, purely personal insights, all but incommunicable" (5). The Birth of Tragedy, the book about Dionysus, is thus an impossible book, with much Dionysiac self-contradiction. The seeming contradictory description of Dionysus in section 18 of The Birth of Tragedy, which renders Dionysus as Apollonian illusion, is inherent already to Dionysiac truth. As such, I am not sympathetic with any philosophical attempt to resolve the contradiction within Dionysus. The contradiction in Section 18 is not apparently "one of Nietzsche's careless mistakes, a slip on his part." For this view of contradiction as a mistake, see John Wilcox, Truth and Value in Nietzsche, 109. For a more detailed discussion of this problem of contradiction, see Maudemarie Clark, "Language and Deconstruction: Nietzsche, de Man, and Postmodernism."

to reassert its own oneness which is threatened in the Apollonian process of individualization. It is in this context that Dionysus is depicted as an "internal contradiction" and as "the supreme artist": "God as the supreme artist, amoral, recklessly creating and destroying, realizing himself indifferently in whatever he does or undoes, ridding himself by his acts of the embarrassment of his riches and the strain of his internal contradictions" (BT, p. 9). When Dionysus creates, it is only in order to destroy it. In the same way, his destruction is only for the sake of creation. It is then not misleading to see Dionysus and Apollo as the two sides of the same God.<sup>30</sup>

That which concerns us in this brief summary of the relation between Dionysus and Apollo is the fact that the former cannot come into being without the aid of the latter. To put it another way, without illusion and dissimulation no truth is possible. Even though one can attribute the most fundamental and the most original truth to Dionysus, it should be granted that Dionysus is the very impossibility of truth in its original oneness. As many Nietzsche scholars point out, here is a Nietzsche who is bound up with Kantian philosophy which he wants to

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<sup>30</sup> About the complex relation between Dionysus and Apollo, and their development into Greek tragedy, and later into opera, see Carol Jacobs, The Dissimulating Harmony, chapter one, entitled, "Nietzsche: The Stammering text: The Fragmentary Studies: Preliminary to The Birth of Tragedy."

criticize and reject. Like the Kantian Ding an sich, Dionysiac truth is asserted to exist as the ground of all beings, which is however beyond cognition and experience. Nevertheless, Nietzsche's Dionysus is not only the supposed cause of all causes as in Kant, but also the primary destruction of all causes. As the supreme artist with internal contradictions, it creates and destroys. This endless repetition of creation and destruction is the mode of Dionysiac being and Dionysiac truth. As such, Dionysus provides the criteria for all phenomena upon which their truth values can be judged. Since Dionysus is the voluntary destroyer of its own creation, the strong tendency of all phenomena to self-identity and to resist destruction can be seen as an indication of their anti-Dionysiac tendency.

Nietzsche's Dionysus is essentially ironic, in that its mode of being is contradictory. As the ground of all beings, Dionysus destroys these phenomenal manifestations and appearances. Since it is the original oneness, it shatters all the differentiated and individualized forms of beings. The truth of Dionysus is the very impossibility of truth, or its truth is the truth of illusion and falsity. The eyes of Dionysus, being fixed on the totality and original truth of beings, cause the downfall of all that is not total and not originally true. Thus Dionysiac irony

sees all Apollonian appearances of beings not as proper concepts, but as metaphors. Appearances are metaphors, and irony in Dionysus lies in its self-conscious use of metaphors for the sake of their negation, and its negation is derived from its vision of the totality.<sup>31</sup> As there is no Dionysus without the assumed totality of all beings, no irony is possible without the vision of totality.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, the ironic destruction of metaphor is not from a pure negativity, but from a positive vision of totality. As with Kierkegaard, irony is inseparable from "its divine infinitude, which allows nothing whatever to endure."<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> "Irony is in one sense metatropological, for it is deployed in the self-conscious awareness of the possible misuse of figurative language...It points to the potential foolishness of all linguistic characterizations of reality as much as to the absurdity of the beliefs it parodies." See Hayden White, Metahistory, 37.

<sup>32</sup> Kenneth Burke in "Four Master Tropes," from which Hayden White's understanding of irony and metaphor is derived, says that "in relativism there is no irony." For Burke, metaphor is perspective and irony is totalistic. This essay appears in his A Grammar of Motives. See also his "Perspective as Metaphor" in Permanence and Change: An Anatomy of Purpose, 89-96.

Nietzsche himself is no doubt a perspectivist, as his definition reveals "In so far as the word 'knowledge' has any meaning, the world is knowable; but it is interpretable otherwise, it has no meaning behind it, but countless meanings.--'perspectivism.'" See The Will to Power, §481. For more discussion of his perspectivism, see Jean Granier, "Perspectivism and Interpretation," in The New Nietzsche; Arthur Danto, "Nietzsche's Perspectivism," in Nietzsche: A Collection of Critical Essays, and Tracy B. Strong, "Texts and Pretexts: Reflections on Perspectivism in Nietzsche."

<sup>33</sup> Kierkegaard, The Concept of Irony, 40.

Nietzsche's inquiry into how Dionysus gives rise to representation finds in music the most unmediated phenomenal manifestation of Dionysus. While Apollo is the patron of plastic and visual arts, Dionysus inspires non-visual music. Here the priority of music above plastic art is due to the fact that music is imageless, thereby being "earlier than appearance and beyond it" (BT, p. 46). However, we should be warned against any temptation to take music as Dionysus himself. For music is already appearance, though imageless: "for it is impossible for music to represent the essential nature of the will [Dionysus]...Rather we should say that music appears as the will" (BT, p. 45). Though music is not Dionysus, it is prior to language, which requires images for its own being, and it follows that "language, the organ and symbol of appearance, can never succeed in bringing the innermost core of music to the surface" (BT, p. 46). Nietzsche here establishes a hierarchy of Dionysiac manifestation, from imageless music, to images, and then to language. And based on this hierarchy, he explains the process of how music brings forth language through the figure of Archilochus, the lyrical poet, the union between musician and poet.

He [the lyrical poet] is, first and foremost, a Dionysiac artist, becomes wholly identified with the original Oneness [Ur-Einen], its pain and

contradiction, and producing a replica [Abbild] of that Oneness as music, if music may legitimately be seen as a repetition [Wiederholung] of the world; however, this music becomes visible to him again, as in a dream similitude, through the Apollonian dream influence. That reflection, without image or idea, of original pain in music, [Jener bild- und begrifflose Widerschein des Urschmerzes in der Musik], with its redemption through illusion, now produces a second reflection as a single simile or example... we see Dionysus and the maenads, we see the drunken reveler Archilochus, sunk down in sleep...and now Apollo approaches him and touches him with his laurel. The sleeper's enchantment through Dionysiac music now begins to emit sparks of imagery [Bilderfunken], poems which, at their point of highest evolution, will bear the name of tragedies and dramatic dithyrambs (BT, p. 38)

Casting aside his subjectivity, the lyrical poet achieves a union with Dionysus, and as a result he is able to repeat that union in a musical representation. However, that musical representation has nothing to do with the poet's subjectivity, since Dionysus uses the poet and turns him into a means for his own phenomenal appearance. Thus the poet becomes the embodiment of Dionysus. The poet does not see any images, because he himself is "his images, his images are objectified versions of himself": "The Dionysiac musician, himself imageless, is nothing but original pain and reverberation of the image" (BT, p. 39). In his original oneness with Dionysus, the poet becomes a metaphor of Dionysus, without seeing himself as a metaphor nor knowing himself as such--a metaphor which is impossible to translate. This impossible metaphor is a kind of nerve stimulation before it is translated into an image in "Truth



and Lying." There is a certain signature of Dionysus in a nerve stimulation, which is located in the body, thus without subjectivity. This absence of subjectivity is a precondition for receiving a nerve stimulation in a similar way that the poet can enter into the union with Dionysus only through the rejection of his subjectivity. The Dionysiac image, which is inscribed into a subject without subjectivity, is imageless. Insofar as the lyric poet remains in that state of Dionysiac oneness, he is yet not poet, but a Dionysiac reveler. As a Dionysiac reveler, the lyric poet writes with his own body. Primitive poetry is one of bodily movement or stimulation, and inarticulate cries of ecstasy.

Before inquiring further into the problem of verbal representation of Dionysiac truth, we should not forget that when Nietzsche gives a mythological explanation to the birth of lyric poetry through Archilochus, his explanation is meant to be understood only within the context of the Greek Dionysiac community. Such a consideration is necessary, since we have to explain how the lyric poet, without binding himself to the conventional system of concepts, could speak in images and metaphors to his community. Due to the very nature of Dionysus as the destroyer of individuation and cultures, no community can

be founded on the system of concepts. If society depends for its own being on the system of concepts or the synchronic structure of language, as Nietzsche says in "Truth and Lying," what then is the foundation of Dionysiac community, if not society? This question, we remember, is the very focus of our discussion of "Truth and Lying," and in our attempt to answer the question we come to the present investigation of Dionysus and Apollo. Maybe the best description of Dionysiac community can be found in Nietzsche's depiction of the dithyrambic chorus in section 8:

The dithyrambic chorus on the other hand is the chorus of the transformed, who have forgotten their civic past and social rank, who have become timeless servants of their god and live outside all social spheres. While all the other types of the Greek choric verse are simply the highest intensification of the Apollonian musician, in the dithyramb we see a community of unconscious actors all of whom see one another as enchanted. (BT, p. 56)

As we have seen already through the figure of Archilochus, the dithyrambic chorus is transformed into metaphors of Dionysus. The transformation is effected only by the chorus' forgetting of their selves, past, and social rank, thus standing themselves outside society. All the subjectivity of the chorus members is emptied and evacuated for the sake of Dionysus. Being drained out of their contents, they become empty forms or empty signs, waiting for Dionysus to fill their emptiness. When their self-

evacuation is complete, they, being no longer artists, becomes art works of Dionysus. Now the subject of representation is not man, but Dionysus. And the medium of representation is not language, but the very body of man with which Dionysus writes. Therefore, being art works of Dionysus, they are incapable of understanding Dionysus. If the dithyrambic chorus is a community, it is the community of art works, not of artists; therefore the community is incapable of understanding the meaning of itself.

If the members of the dithyrambic chorus are metaphors of Dionysus, the problem is then what happens to the audience to that primitive tragedy. Is there any reader of metaphors other than Dionysus? Nietzsche says that "an audience of spectators, such as we know it [as the observer, not as empathic participants], was unknown to the Greeks" (BT, p. 54). For Nietzsche, only Dionysus is the reader of metaphors, and all the others, whether actors or spectators, are his metaphors. Nietzsche has to explain that "the votary of Dionysus could not be understood except by his own kind" (BT, p. 28).<sup>34</sup> Of course, that

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<sup>34</sup> Here we might wonder about how Nietzsche sustains an impossible position. Despite his assertion that only Dionysus is the reader of metaphors, Nietzsche's discourse is moving on the fundamental assumption that he is one reader. He thus asserts something that is impossible to be asserted. In the likewise manner, metaphors created out of divine possession are impossible metaphors, since they are not figure nor language.

understanding is not a cognitive understanding, but another word for participation, that is, "projecting oneself and then acting as though one had really entered another body, another character" (BT, p. 55). Through that projective participation one is related to metaphors. "Metaphor, for the authentic poet, is not a figure of rhetoric but a representative image standing concretely before him in lieu of concept" (BT, p. 55). The poet sees dithyrambic chorus members and finds in them metaphors of Dionysus while himself being transformed into another metaphor. Therefore, "the poet is poet only insofar as he sees himself surrounded by living, acting shapes into whose innermost being he penetrates" (BT, p. 55).

If the Dionysiac ecstatic artist is merely the art work, Apollonian dream artist is the one who produces art works. Apollo as the principium individuationis transforms the Dionysiac artist-art work into an individual artist. For the drunken reveler Archilochus to be lyrical poet, he has to be put to sleep, so he can translate the imageless music through images under the influence of Apollo. Life is either dream (illusion) or intoxication (the original oneness). Apollo has to make Archilochus sleep off his Dionysiac intoxication. Now being himself not the images

of Dionysus any more, he is allowed to see these images.<sup>35</sup> But seeing also accompanies not-seeing, since seeing comes only after Dionysiac oneness or totality is broken. As Nietzsche put in the 1871 preface, "the laws of optics" "depend on the necessity of error" (BT, p. 10). Seeing is the Apollonian translation of music into "sparks of imagery and poems," which is the translation of the untranslatable and incomprehensible. Once the poet himself was a metaphor of Dionysus; now he becomes its translator. Once the poet was a passive recipient of nerve stimulations; now he transforms himself into an active translator of them into images and metaphors.

The problem with Apollonian illusion and optics is how this transition from non-seeing to seeing, and from imageless music to images is realized, or how Dionysus allows himself to be translated into images. According to Nietzsche's account of Archilochus, Archilochus becomes a pictorial or verbal translator of music through Apollonian images while he is released from the grip of Dionysus.

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<sup>35</sup> Although Nietzsche makes a distinction between the lyric poet and the epic poet in terms of whether the poet himself becomes his own images or he merely sees these images, the distinction cannot be pushed too far. For example, Archilochus in his self-forgetting becomes imageless images (music) of Dionysus, but this music has to be rendered "visible to him again" "through the Apollonian dream influence" (BT, p. 38). Therefore, Archilochus, once being himself images, sees images like the epic poet and it is only in that dreamlike seeing that he produces lyric poetry.

Later in section 9, Nietzsche explains this transition from Dionysus to Apollo in terms of "a phenomenon which is the exact opposite of a familiar optical one" (BT, p. 59):

After an energetic attempt to focus on the sun, we have, by way of remedy almost, dark spots before our eyes when we turn away. Conversely, the luminous images of the Sophoclean heroes--these Apollonian masks--are the necessary productions of a deep look into the horror of nature; luminous spots, as it were, designed to cure an eye hurt by the ghastly night....and now we see that the poet's entire conception was nothing more nor less than the luminous afterimage which kind nature provides our eyes after a look into the abyss (BT, pp. 59-60)

Quite contrary to the conventional metaphor of the sun in representing truth or presence, Nietzsche here uses complete darkness (or the ghastly night) as a metaphor of Dionysus. Dionysus is not the presence of truth, but its absence, and therefore in Dionysiac experience is nothing to be seen. Since Dionysus is the eclipse of the sun, it is the abyss, the primordial void and chaos, into which all supposed meanings of life are drowned and lost forever. Therefore, the Dionysiac wisdom, which is put through the mouth of Silenus, is the celebration of death.<sup>36</sup> When the members of the Dithyrambic chorus are in union with Dionysus, they experience this complete nothingness which

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<sup>36</sup> To the question of what is man's greatest good, Silenus answers, "Ephemeral wretch, begotten by accident and toil,... What would be best for you is quite beyond your reach: not to have been born, not to be, to be nothing. But the second best is to die soon" (BT, p. 29).

comes after their self-abnegation and self-evacuation. If Dionysus then withdraws itself from any manifestation with images, it is because "there is nothing to be disclosed--no being, no ground, not even Being (e.g., as *eidos*), but only the abyss of indetermination, nothing."<sup>37</sup> Nietzsche takes Dionysiac nothing as the primordial oneness and unity underlying all phenomenal appearances and truths. This look into the abyss, this seeing into nothing, is the cause of Dionysiac man's and Hamlet's inability of action: "both have looked deeply into the true nature of things, they have understood and are now loath to act" (BT, p. 51). If the Dionysiac understanding is the understanding of nothing, meaninglessness of life, and the absence of truth, how then does it allow itself to be interpreted as beautiful images? How does this nothing give rise to Apollonian images and further verbal representations? The Apollonian interpretation of Dionysus through images then is not the act of interpretation, but of giving in the sense of giving something to empty hands.

Nietzsche's account of Dionysus underlies the fact that what is proper is nothing, abyss, and absence, and therefore any Apollonian interpretation of Dionysus is destined to be improper. The carrying over from Dionysus

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<sup>37</sup> For this Dionysiac nothing and abyss, see John Sallis, "Dionysus--In Excess of Metaphysics."

to Apollo is a metaphor without its proper meaning. Between Dionysiac truth and Apollonian illusion is only another abyss in the sense that the transition from the one to the other is not a gradual process, but a disruptive and discontinuous jump. A metaphor from one species to another species is a category mistake. Dionysus does not provide any ground or foundation for Apollonian metaphors. With no ground to its metaphors at all, Apollo is doomed to be groundless, temporal, and ephemeral. When their groundlessness is forgotten, there happens to be the birth of epic poetry, as in Homer. Nietzsche views Homer as a naive artist in that the latter takes Apollonian metaphors as solid entities after forgetting their ephemeral temporality. As such, Homer's rise toward epic poetry is also a fall into the oblivion of the groundlessness of metaphors.

Despite his thesis that Homer's epic poetry marks a complete victory of Apollonian illusion over Dionysiac chaos, Nietzsche also calls to attention the Apollonian victory initiated and stimulated by Dionysus:

nature [Dionysus] often uses illusions [Apollo] ... in order to accomplish its secret purposes... In the case of the Greeks it was the will wishing to behold itself in the work of art, in the transcendence of genius; but in order so to behold itself its creatures have first to view themselves as glorious, to transpose themselves to a higher sphere, without having that sphere of pure contemplation either challenge them or upbraid them with insufficiency. (BT, pp. 31-32)



As the will to power Dionysus wants to behold itself, but since it is imageless it is unable to do so. This Dionysiac contradiction is resolved only by creating images false to itself, therefore by creating another contradiction. Dionysus transposes itself into Apollonian images and thus invites its own destruction by the hands of Apollo: Dionysiac nothing is displaced by Apollonian images. Without this Apollonian illusion and the following falsification of itself, Dionysus cannot be related to itself. Its self-reflection always has to take a form of illusion, falsity, and metaphoric transference. Then there are two moments to Dionysiac reality, that is, Dionysus and Apollo, which complement each other. Since Dionysus cannot behold itself, it relies upon Apollonian illusions. But because these illusions are false, Dionysus, that is nothing, destroys them in order not to be deceived into taking them as its reality. Being essentially "internal contradiction," Dionysus is like "a child tossing pebbles or building in a sand pile and then destroying what he has built" (BT, pp. 143-44). Like Dionysus's taking temporary illusions for its appearance, buildings built in and on sands expect their own destruction at the very moment of their construction.

The problem of Hamlet for Nietzsche lies in his inability to play like a child, who is, though a

contradiction, innocent of his contradiction. Since he has looked deeply into the true nature of things, Hamlet becomes a victim of his own look, and consequently he is unable to act. For the groundless nature of things "enters [his] consciousness ... it is viewed with loathing" (BT, p. 51). Unlike a child, Hamlet loathes "building in a sand pile," thinking that any sand building is doomed to be destroyed. Being conscious of the contradiction of Dionysus, Hamlet hates to repeat Dionysiac plays. He therefore does not participate in the Dionysiac repetitive play of construction and destruction, but remains as a spectator who observes such a contradiction. Hamlet, with a desire to get rid of contradiction in Dionysus, refuses to participate in Dionysiac plays. Thus, being conscious of Dionysiac contradiction and being bound to it, Hamlet is unable to act--his action does not have any true ground. Insofar as he wants to ground his action on a true foundation, he represents "the inquiring mind of Socrates," which tries to escape from Dionysiac contradiction. Being terrified by that contradiction, Socrates makes it his task to resolve it by "separating true knowledge from illusion and error" (BT, p. 94). Dionysiac repetitive plays of construction and destruction for Socrates have to be consolidated into a single truth or a single play without the moment of destruction. In this respect Socratism is an

attempt to uplift plays into concepts, concepts with logical coherence exclusive of any contradiction. Socratism also means an attempt to replace Dionysiac nothingness with a moral, logical, and metaphysical presence. As such, it is "a clever bulwark erected against the truth [that is, Dionysiac truth]" (BT, p. 5). As a theoretical man, Socrates looks for the ground and foundation of all Apollonian illusions and phenomena. Instead of finding their ground (or groundlessness) in Dionysiac nothingness, Socrates gives metaphysical foundations to them, which are utterly anti-Dionysiac. And by connecting phenomena to metaphysical principles, Socrates in turn deserts Apollo too and moves into a world of concepts devoid of Apollo as well as Dionysus. Therefore the initial binary opposition between Dionysus and Apollo is forsaken for another set of opposition between Dionysus and Socrates.

Socratic irony is the irony of theory or of the system of concepts, which is born out of the belief in perfect, absolute, and universal truth. Such a belief in absolute truth, finding in reality nothing satisfying that standard, turns its back to what is given and finds its home in transcendental idealism. And quite contrary to his intention to found truth by way of reasoning and logic, Socrates ends up with denying reality and Dionysiac truth

in the name of conceptual truth. Socrates for Nietzsche is the "most secretive of ironists," because his assumed turning toward truth is nothing more than "a dodge" or "a clever bulwark" against Dionysiac truth (BT,, pp. 4-5). Socratic irony then is tragic irony as in the case of Oedipus, who kills his father unwittingly. Socrates is ignorant of the ironic implications of his metaphysics, and irony in him lies in his doing exactly what he attempts to undo. His irony is not self-reflexive, so that it is received by him as anything other than irony. Likewise, concepts for Socrates are not self-reflexive, and they are taken as truth, not as metaphors. Socratic irony in regard to language lies in its blindness to its metaphoricity or its ironic nature. Such an absence of self-reflexivity in Socratic irony constitutes its difference from Dionysiac self-reflexive irony.<sup>38</sup> That difference is also between philosophy and art, between Dionysiac truth and Socratic scientism.

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<sup>38</sup> Michel Haar explains Nietzsche's will to power in terms of its self-reflexivity: "The Will to Power therefore always has to do with itself. It possesses a fundamental reflexivity, i.e., it is always overcoming itself, be it through action or through reaction. As its origin it presents itself to and for itself as a chaotic and contradictory diversity of elementary impulses ... Chaos is to represent equally the moment when, all values collapsed, the Will to Power effects a return to itself, a sort of return to point zero" (366-67). See his "Nietzsche and Metaphysical Language."

## IV

Now it is in order that we confront the question raised at the end of our discussion of "Truth and Lying," that is, Nietzsche's irresolution between the rational man (or concepts, philosophy) and the intuitive man (or metaphors, art). His irresolution is, as we remember, due to a hermeneutical consideration, the problem of understanding. Even though Nietzsche is inclined toward praising metaphors and condemning concepts, he is unable to embrace the following consequence, the impossibility of understanding. In our discussion of The Birth of Tragedy we have considered the same problem from a mythopoetic (or theological) perspective,<sup>39</sup> and we can ask now whether Nietzsche here makes a substantial affirmation of either the intuitive man or the rational man. In his denunciation of Socratic scientism and his call for a return to pre-Socratic Greek it appears that Nietzsche affirms substantially the intuitive man. Nietzsche, in the 1871 preface, describes Socratism as "the glow of a sun about to set," and as "the period of dissolution and weakness." And in section 20 Nietzsche declares that "Socratic man has run his course," while asking the reader to believe in

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<sup>39</sup> Nietzsche's account of Greek myth is theological insofar as it is supposed to be the absolute origin of his mythical discourse.

"Dionysiac life."<sup>40</sup> Nietzsche proposes that "all that is now called culture, education, civilization will one day have to appear before the incorruptible judge, Dionysus" (BT, p. 120). When his denunciations of Socratic culture are taken into consideration, Nietzsche's confirmation of the intuitive man appears undeniable. However, it is exactly at this moment of Nietzsche's resolute endorsement of the intuitive man that we are reminded that his affirmation is located within a myth, which does not allow any further inquiry into it, since it is myth; he could affirm it only because he did not need to account for it. Myth is and remains myth only insofar as it is taken for granted as truth, without its truth being questioned.

Dionysiac revelers, intuitive men, are those who are desubjectified and thus turned into empty signs in order to become metaphors for Dionysus. At the moment of their achieving oneness with Dionysus their selves are annihilated to the point that they are not themselves any more, but art works of Dionysus. Being themselves desubjectified art works of Dionysus, they are unable to ask the meanings of their beings, and when they happen to

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<sup>40</sup> As Walter Kaufmann rightly pointed out, Nietzsche's repudiation of Socratism does not mean that Nietzsche repudiates the personality of Socrates. Socratism therefore should not be confused with the historical Socrates himself. See his Nietzsche, Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist, and Werner J. Dannhauser, Nietzsche's View of Socrates.

speak, they speak only in "sheer forbidden metaphors and unheard of conceptual compounds" whose meanings lie beyond comprehension (TL, p. 256). Their metaphors, which do not function within the system of language, are not meant to be understood, and their metaphors are even prior to what Nietzsche describes as the first metaphor in "Truth and Lying," the transportation from a nerve stimulus into an image. Then their metaphors are zero metaphors, mere sounds without images, music without melody. As such, they are prior to the birth of language, and their community is the community without or beyond understanding. The intuitive man is unable to "learn from experience and falls again and again into the same pit into which he fell before" (TL, p. 256). It is, therefore, only within the context of a Dionysiac myth that Nietzsche can praise the intuitive man and condemn the rational man. In that community of Dionysiac revelers the hermeneutical question of understanding cannot be asked, since it is located where such a question is irrelevant. As a result, the reader of Nietzsche cannot ask about the meaning of these Dionysiac revelers: Nietzsche renders it as the origin of all origins and the cause of all causes which, therefore, does not allow any further backward investigation, and which are to be taken for granted like self-evident truth. In a way that the reader of "Truth and Lying" has to decide between

the rational man and the intuitive man, the reader of The Birth of Tragedy has no other choice but to either reject or accept Nietzsche's Dionysiac community without asking what it means. For Nietzsche the meaning is located in the body, in the zero metaphor zone, which is unable to speak. Then the problem with Nietzsche's confirmation of Dionysiac truth is how he can confirm what he cannot think, nor imagine, since Dionysus gives rise to nothing at all. However, the very nature of myth, as the zero zone of meaning, makes such a question irrelevant and inappropriate.<sup>41</sup>

If Nietzsche cannot but address Dionysiac truth only through myth, his myth is, it should be remembered, also a metaphor for Dionysus. For when Dionysus, being itself imageless, makes a phenomenal manifestation, it has to take Apollonian images and illusion, and its truth becomes "a mobile army of metaphors" (TL, p. 250). If Nietzsche as in the case of Archilochus sees a Dionysiac vision of truth, it then follows that his vision is only a metaphor clothed with an Apollonian image. In his relation to Dionysiac truth Nietzsche is destined to be ironic, since his seeing

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<sup>41</sup> Addressing such a question, Peter Pütz in "Nietzsche: Art and Intellectual Inquiry" says that "Nietzsche goes in search of truths which can only be conveyed by myth and by that child of myth, the work of art; on the other the truth which is reserved to myth and art is dragged before the modern tribunal of the intellect and condemned as falsehood" (3).



is also unseeing. Such a simultaneous copresence of seeing and unseeing at the moment of his gaining a vision of Dionysus frustrates any attempt to render it in a proper way. Ironical vision of Dionysus therefore has to find its expression in metaphor, which has no proper meaning to undo its metaphoricity. Otherwise Nietzsche has to choose the fate of Hamlet: as Hamlet is unable to act, Nietzsche would be sustained within his ironical vision and would deny his vision by way of metaphors. Nietzsche's Dionysiac myth, being itself a metaphor without its proper meaning, is a one-way transference into wandering. And it is in this context that Nietzsche, as he says in Thus Spoke Zarathustra, prefers not to be understood, since understanding supposes a proper meaning in a metaphor and falsely identifies each other. In other words, to understand means to be a rational man, in spite of Nietzsche's injunction to the contrary. With Nietzsche, understanding becomes an act of imprisoning oneself within the prison house of the system of conceptual language.

## V

Nietzsche's "Truth and Lying" is not a coherent study about either language or metaphor, but a condemnation of language as a means of expressing truth. For Nietzsche, truth is fundamentally ironical, since it cannot say its

truth properly, so that what it says means something else. Metaphor or language is born out of that ironic situation of truth and thus is a "solution of God's own tensions" (BT, p. 9). As a temporary solution of Dionysus's inner contradiction through Apollo, metaphor at the moment of its birth is to be deserted by its parents, and therefore is doomed to the destiny of a wandering orphan. As Nietzsche explains in "Truth and Lying," the metaphoric origin of language thus indicates the homelessness and parentlessness of language: language wants to say truth, but turns out to say something else. Like Dionysiac truth itself, language is ironic and is incapable of returning to that which gives rise to it. Nietzsche says, however, that this wandering life of orphan metaphor comes to an end at the age of Socrates, when it is transcended into concepts. Finding metaphors as orphans, Socrates chooses for them stepparents, concepts, and thus put them into the system of a familial and social hierarchy. Such a transcendence of metaphors into concepts marks the advent of the system of language and metaphysics. Even though metaphors by being transformed into concepts are not doomed to endless wandering any more, Nietzsche however sees that transcendence as nothing but the forgetting their original metaphoricity. Nietzsche's condemnation of concepts is due to the fact that concepts by forgetting of their origin are

radically separated from their true parents and are falsely identified with their stepparents: metaphoric desire, the desire to return home, which is not of course realizable, is now forsaken once and for all for the sake of false comfort and contentment. As such, Nietzsche sees Socratic concepts as anti-Dionysiac, and "a clever bulwark erected against the truth."

By finding all language as originally metaphoric and seeing concepts as worn-out metaphors, Nietzsche radicalizes and universalizes metaphor. Metaphor becomes radical, since Nietzsche dispenses with proper meanings, and it is universal, since it is equated with language itself. Therefore Nietzsche's discussion of metaphor does not contribute to its understanding either as one of tropes or as language in general. Though many metaphors can be identified only from their contexts, to our dismay, Nietzsche discusses metaphors only on the level of words, while ignoring their semantic context. If we want to find his contribution to metaphor, it lies in another direction, that is, in his widening the gap between metaphors and concepts, and in his privileging the former as a means of unsettling and destroying the system of the latter. More fundamental than these destructive use of metaphors is his exploration of the relation between truth and metaphor or between Dionysus and Apollo. As for Nietzsche, whenever

truth happens, it happens metaphorically and improperly. Truth cannot reflect its own truth, so that it has to be reflected upon the uneven mirror of metaphor. If the discourse of philosophy has relied heavily on metaphors or literature, it is not by mere chance or by a rhetorical consideration of illuminating its truth, but due to its inner necessity, its inner impossibility of saying truth except by way of metaphors: "unless he [man] wants to settle for truth in the form of tautology, i.e., for empty husks, he will perpetually exchange truths for illusions" (TL, p. 248).

## CHAPTER TWO

### Hint-words and Metaphor in the Later Heidegger

When the people of the world all know  
beauty as beauty, there arises the  
recognition of ugliness. When they all  
know the good as good, there arises the  
recognition of evil.  
(from The Natural Way of Lao Tzu)

Our discussion of Nietzsche in the former chapter evolved around the problematic relation between truth and language, concept and metaphor, and Dionysus and Apollo. For Nietzsche, original truth is not only ironic and contradictory, but also is beyond the reach of human understanding and language. Between truth and language thus lies the double barriers frustrating their happy union forever; one barrier is ontological and the other is linguistic. This double impossibility of attaining and speaking of truth necessitates and occasions the birth of metaphorical truth. It is through the mediation of metaphor that the gap between original truth and language is temporally bridged and man is able to speak of truth; man translates nerve stimulus into an image, which again is translated into a sound. However, this gain of truth through metaphoric transference is not pure gain, since it announces the radical break from original truth. The

mother of metaphor, reality, dies at the very moment it gives birth. As such, metaphor (or language in general) for Nietzsche is like an orphan. However, this orphan metaphor is adopted into an institution, which arranges for it a false parent. This moment of institutionalization of metaphor marks the advent of conceptual truth. While metaphoric truth retains the memory of the death of its mother (though not the mother herself), when this memory of its tragic birth is completely forgotten, it is transcended into concept and is given its place in the total system of concepts. This "anthropomorphic truth" now, the system of concepts, replaces not only original truth but the metaphoric as well. Truth now can be discussed only in terms of the system of concepts against which a statement has to be judged. When one states "man is a rational animal," the statement can be proved false or true only after being reflected upon the total system of concepts. The system of concepts is thus equivalent to the rules of the truth game which man has to master and play accordingly and properly.

The conceptual truth for Nietzsche is nothing more than a double forgetting of original truth. The relation of metaphor to unknown reality is consigned to oblivion and they are hardened into the system of concepts. From the moment that metaphors are safely situated and placed within

the system, the latter begins to decide and determine the former's value and meaning; false parents (concepts) are imposed upon orphan metaphors which are now expected to act and function as their real children. As a result, culture is conceived as nature and conventional truth as original truth. The double forgetting thus, as Nietzsche points out in "On Truth and Falsity in an Extra-Moral Sense," brings about a more serious and dangerous consequence, the justification and rationalization of falsity. If Nietzsche is concerned with metaphor, it is because he finds in metaphor a possibility of reversing and destroying the system of conceptual order. That is to say, if the system of concepts is founded on the oblivion of their metaphoric origin, Nietzsche wants to restore that fabulous origin to concepts so that their falsity and conventionality are to be exposed. The value of metaphor for Nietzsche lies in its destructive relation to the system of concepts, and the value is therefore negative. Even though concepts are freed away from the conceptual system and are restored to their original metaphoricity, they are unable to return to their true mother, the reality, since they were born in her death pang. Metaphor for Nietzsche thus can be another metaphor for negative knowledge.

If there is a problem with Nietzsche's conception of metaphor as negative knowledge, it is his total

indifference to a hermeneutical question of understanding. Like Nietzsche, one may commit himself to the task of destroying the system of concepts on the ground that it is utterly false. However, after that destruction he has to confront its consequence and answer the question of how one can communicate with metaphors in the absence of a system of concepts. Of course, to name such metaphors as metaphors is not legitimate, since the disappearance of concepts invalidates the very ground of metaphors. Maybe Nietzsche's radical polarization between concepts and metaphors is not healthy, and prevents us from asking the hermeneutical question of understanding. It is in this context that in the present chapter I propose to inquire into this hermeneutical problem, which has been largely ignored in our discussion of Nietzsche. In asking into the hermeneutical problem of understanding, I will reconsider the question of the system of concepts along with the renewing question of what metaphor is and what its relation to the system is.

The hermeneutical question of understanding is essentially the relation of part and whole. Every word has its meaning only in its relation to the linguistic totality (or the totality of signification or the worldhood of the



world in Heidegger's Being and Time)<sup>1</sup> without which it cannot be a word. Such an inseparable part and whole relation constitutes the notion of hermeneutical circle, into which one has to enter in order to speak.<sup>2</sup> In raising the question of such a hermeneutical circle with the help of Heidegger's later writings, this chapter aims at complementing the semiotic treatment of metaphor in the former chapter by considering the relation of metaphor with the totality of language. This implies that in understanding a poetic or creative metaphor the whole system of language, to which it belongs, is to be taken into reconsideration and is to be challenged. If every word "causes the world of the view of the world which lies behind it to appear," it has a potential power to

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<sup>1</sup> For an excellent study of Heideggerian semiology, see Donald Marshall, "The Ontology of the Literary Sign: Notes toward a Heideggerian revision of Semiology." See also Heidegger's chapter 32, "Understanding and Interpretation," in Being and Time, 188-95, hereafter cited as BT. The following abbreviations will be used for Heidegger's texts: ID for Identity and Difference, OW for On the Way to Language, PL for Poetry, Language, Thought, LH for "Letter on Humanism," WC for What is Called Thinking, PG for "The Principle of Ground," RP for "Remembrance of the Poet."

<sup>2</sup> For a classic statement of the hermeneutical circle in terms of part and whole relation, see E. D. Hirsh, Validity and Interpretation, 76-77, and Gadamer, Truth and Method, 167-73, 260-63. In his essay "Heidegger, Kierkegaard, and the Hermeneutical Circle," William Spanos makes a distinction between the temporal hermeneutics of Heidegger and "the spatial hermeneutics of the metaphysical and New Critical of Structuralist standpoint," which Heidegger, Spanos maintains, rejects on the ground that it leads to a closed totality or a closed circle.

restructure and reshape the world of language and our system of presuppositions.<sup>3</sup> Metaphor then is not a local problem, but a universal one, whose signification is to come to light only in its relation with the totality of language.

# I

As he defends himself from misunderstanding of the terms such as "idle talk," "falling," or "inauthenticity," in Being and Time by warning his readers against taking it in a censorious sense,<sup>4</sup> Heidegger in his later writings, especially as in "Letter on Humanism" and "The Nature of Language," offers the same word of caution to them to the effect that phrases such as "the house of Being" or "words, like flowers" should not be taken either figuratively or metaphorically (LH, p. 237; OW, p. 100). That Heidegger

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<sup>3</sup> Gadamer, Truth and Method, 415-16.

<sup>4</sup> For example, Heidegger says that "The expression 'idle talk' ["Gerede"] is not to be used here in a 'disparaging' signification" (BT, p. 211). This Heidegger's warning against an evaluative signification is also applied to the terms like "idle talk" and "inauthenticity" (BT, pp. 264-65). Here the question regarding Heidegger's warning is how we can take these terms without negative implications, since they are defined as against their positive equivalents, that is, "genuine talk" and "authenticity." Referring to that difficulty of understanding such terms, William Richardson explains that Heidegger never explicitly defines what he means by "authenticity" or "inauthenticity," though he gives some hints for a definition. See Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought, 50.

offers such a word of caution is not surprising, since his writings are full of metaphorical or figurative statements, which undermine or pun on the conceptual vocabulary of philosophy.<sup>5</sup> As a matter of fact, his non-traditional use of language quite often appears enigmatic and beyond comprehension, thereby eliciting complaints against his language either from scholars or common readers.<sup>6</sup> The problem with his later writings and his caution concerning them reminds us of the problem of his vocabulary in Being and Time: language impels readers in a certain direction from which Heidegger warns them. The phrases "the house of Being" and "words, like flowers" gravitate toward the metaphorical, but Heidegger forces them to turn away from that tendency. Inevitably as a consequence, there follows a tension or conflict between language (or the totality of signification) and Heidegger's use of it.

The tension between a saying and its meaning, between vehicle and tenor, has been traditionally considered to constitute the essence of the metaphorical. If the metaphorical is defined as such, the problem, which arises

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<sup>5</sup> For Heidegger's use of puns in his later writings, see Gerald Bruns, Heidegger's Estrangements, 140-49.

<sup>6</sup> For example, James Edie in his response to Joseph Kockelmans' article "Ontological Difference", quotes some of Heideggerian sentences and remarks that he cannot tell "whether or not they are meaningful utterances in his natural language" (221).

in regard to Heidegger's two seemingly metaphorical statements, is as follows: by rejecting the metaphoricity of his sayings, Heidegger seems to deny any possible tension between his sayings and their meanings. However, as for readers, Heidegger's rejection of the metaphorical happens to strengthen doubly the tension between them, since without attributing the two seeming metaphorical statements to metaphor readers are more at a loss regarding how to understand them. As a result, Heidegger's repudiation of metaphor indirectly causes the metaphoricity of his sayings to be more metaphorical. Heidegger's repudiation of the metaphorical then is paradoxical, and cannot be taken as a downright condemnation.<sup>7</sup>

Such a consideration of the paradoxical nature of Heidegger's rejection of metaphor requires us to raise the question of metaphor in close conjunction with his writings on language. That which is paradoxical may be not only Heidegger's rejection of metaphor, but also metaphor itself, especially in its relation with philosophical or

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<sup>7</sup> Since Heidegger's rejection of metaphor is to be considered as paradoxical, I do not agree with Gerald Casenave, who takes it as a downright condemnation. Casenave in "Heidegger and Metaphor" claims that the rejection is "due to his falling prey to the same misunderstanding which is held by the tradition which he criticizes," and takes it his task to correct such a misunderstanding (140).

literal discourse.<sup>8</sup> In case of Heidegger's (philosopher's) rejection of metaphor, the being of metaphor seems to be asserted and affirmed only by way of repudiation: only when it denies and gives up itself, it gains its essence. Given the seemingly paradoxical nature of metaphor, what is to be thought again and is to be explained is the question into the very being of paradox-producing metaphor. To reformulate the question, we might ask why the metaphorical is destined to be paradoxical in its relation to the literal or philosophical discourse, or why "only within metaphysics," to quote again Heidegger's celebrated saying, "is there the metaphorical."<sup>9</sup>

In asking the hermeneutical question of understanding of metaphor, I want to inquire into what gives rise to its paradoxical nature, especially when metaphor becomes a metaphysical concept. And if Heidegger's condemnation of metaphor as belonging within metaphysics is to be taken as a warning against a metaphysical understanding of metaphor, his condemnation is rather an invitation into a further thinking on the nature of metaphor. This thinking invitation is, I propose, also a request to enter into the

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<sup>8</sup> Ronald Bruzina in "Heidegger on the Metaphor and Philosophy" summarizes well the metaphor's "paradoxical place in the philosophic account of discourse" that "metaphor is both excluded from and grounding for rational explication" (185).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 187.

possibility of authentic discourse and to learn to understand metaphor authentically, not paradoxically. Insofar as we take metaphor paradoxically, I would like to argue that we fall into inauthenticity, thus blocking our way into authentic discourse. Thus the question of metaphor is essentially the question of discourse, which in turn can be either authentic or inauthentic. In order to answer these questions about metaphor and discourse in this chapter, I will follow and analyze Heidegger's discussion of poetic or authentic discourse in Unterwegs Zur Sprache, with a focus on "The Nature of Language," and then later inquire into, based on the understanding of authentic discourse, the being of metaphor. As such, this chapter is composed of the parts. In the first part, I will discuss and analyze basic terms, which Heidegger uses for the clarification of poetic discourse. Here in explicating these terms, I tried to limit myself only to those which are essential for the later discussion of metaphor. As a result, many important Heideggerian terms, such as Gelassenheit and Ereignis, have been left without comment. However, this chapter is not intended to be a comprehensive overview of the later Heidegger's view of language. After such a preliminary, I will return to the topic of metaphor, and discuss its position as implied in Heidegger's conception of language. Since he never deals with metaphor

explicitly as an independent topic or thesis in any of his works, my discussion of it is mostly a rethinking of it along with his thinking of language. In undertaking such a task, I will begin my discussion with the renewing question of the hermeneutical circle and silence, which Heidegger elaborated in Being Time, in order to present it anew in the light of the later Heidegger.<sup>10</sup> If the problem of circle and silence is broached again, it is because without their proper consideration any discussion of language and metaphor will remain incomplete. As such, if Heidegger's discussion of language ends with silence in Being and Time, and "any insightful moment ... remains empty and permits no authentic disourse,"<sup>11</sup> now I want to present the later Heidegger in terms of how he translates silence into an authentic discourse.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Of course, the distinction between the early Heidegger and the later Heidegger is in danger of ignoring their continuity. However, for the sake of convenience of discussion, I adopted such a distinction as many commentators have done. As for Heidegger's remark on the distinction, see his Preface to William Richardson, Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought, viii-xxiii, and also 578-81, and Otto Pöggeler, Martin Heidegger's Path of Thinking, 138-9.

<sup>11</sup> Otto Pöggeler, Martin Heidegger's Path of Thinking, 170.

<sup>12</sup> When in "A Dialogue on Language" he observes that the question of Being and language has determined his path of thinking from Being and Time, Heidegger attributes "the fundamental flow of the book" to the fact that "[he] ventured forth too far early," since "it took nearly another ten years before [he] was able to say what [he] was

## II

Although Heidegger in On the Way to Language is concerned primarily with the being of language, he never attempts to discuss or define what language is. Such a non-thematic treatment of language stands in striking contrast to his analysis of it in Being and Time. While the earlier Heidegger seeks to ground the being of language in the totality of signification or in the worldhood of the world, the later Heidegger is found to forsake any search for ground or foundation. Not only does he refuse to find a ground for the phenomenon of language, he charges such an attempt to the science of language or metalinguistics. His charge against any scientific analysis of language is, as we are soon to be informed, based on his conviction that "when we speak of language [as an object for study] we remain entangled in a speaking that is persistently inadequate" (OW, p.75). For Heidegger, the being of language turns away from us as soon as we begin to talk about it and address it as the object of analysis.

Heidegger's refusal to speak of or about language seems to lead to the very impasse of any thinking of language. His refusal no doubt inclines toward the impossibility of any systematic approach to language. But when it is considered from another perspective, his refusal

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thinking" (OW, pp. 7-8).



can be the natural outcome of an attempt to think more fundamentally and more authentically of the being of language, that is, "thinking without science, without philosophy" (OW, p. 61).<sup>13</sup> Linguistics or philosophy of language provides a certain ground upon which one can develop one's understanding of language. Being a ground, which allows one to stand, it in return binds one to a certain destination implied in itself. Standing on that ground, one binds language into that designated destination. However, the binding is two-edged; by binding language with a ground, one in return is bound to it. As such, this dual movement of binding and being bound constitutes the essence of the hermeneutical circle. One cannot think of language without any presupposition or presupposed grounds. Thinking always implies the act of entering into a certain circle, whether science or philosophy. A circle enables one to understand and take a position about language, but at the price of being bound to that circle. For instance, Heidegger in Being and Time

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<sup>13</sup> In discussing some problems in Being and Time, Otto Pöggeler addresses the issue of ground, method, and circle, which concerns us. He asks: "Can a 'hermeneutic' extract itself from the course which the occurrence of truth carves out in order to develop itself 'methodologically' and thus to give the occurrence of truth a fundamentum inconcussum?" According to Pöggeler, Heidegger in Being and Time does not ask the question of what decides and determines a hermeneutical circle on the basis or ground of which he analysis of Dasein and Being develops. See Martin Heidegger's Path of Thinking, 221.

bases his analysis of language on the fore-structures, and moves it into the totalities of signification and intelligibility, and finally into discourse. As a result, his discussion of discourse turns out to be bound to the fore-structures, and discourse as such tends to become idle talk, while authentic discourse remains unspoken and silent. Now in On the Way to Language, Heidegger wants to break through that circle of presuppositions, by refusing to base his discourse on language on any solid foundation.<sup>14</sup>

Therefore, the other side of Heidegger's rejection of philosophy or science of language is his rejection of a hermeneutical circle, as he himself says, "the notion of the accepted circle does not give us an originary experience of the hermeneutical relation" (OW, p. 51). Here by distinguishing the hermeneutical relation from the circle, Heidegger adumbrates that the latter is not essential for the former and that the latter is one actual case of the former's possibilities. The distinction can be taken to imply that a circle can be authentic or inauthentic according to its relation to the hermeneutical relation. Heidegger's rejection of a circle then is to be

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<sup>14</sup> Heidegger radicalizes the notion of ground in his "The Principle of Ground," where he traces its history in Western thinking only in order to unground it and make it abysmal.

limited only to the inauthentic circle. If so, that which is to be brought to light is the notion of the hermeneutical relation, which Heidegger in his dialogue with a Japanese explains in terms of a Greek god, Hermes. Hermes is "the divine messenger" who "brings the message of destiny" (OW, p. 29). By evoking the Greek god and his message, Heidegger attempts to relate hermeneutics not just to interpretation, but to man's "bearing of message and tidings," which is prior to the former. The being of hermeneutics is to be found not in interpretation, but in that which gives rise to interpretation. Since interpretation, as we have discussed in the previous chapter, is in danger of falling into a closed totality, one should be more primordially related to its source and origin. Whereas interpretation is fundamentally bound to language and discourse, Hermes is neither linguistic or discursive, thus being nameless or unnameable. As such, the hermeneutical relation constitutes a man's relation to Hermes, the nameless, whose essence is the former's "abandon[ment] of [his] path of thinking to namelessness" (OW, p. 29). Heidegger's rejection of a hermeneutical circle then should be taken as a shift from the circle of presuppositions to that of the nameless or the unknown.

Heidegger's critical attitude to science or philosophy of language is a reflection of his radical attempt to think

language more originally than any science or philosophy does. Such an attempt can be taken also as an effort to disengage metaphor from a metaphysical interpretation. Heidegger proposes to leave science or philosophy behind only in order to enter into a more fundamental thinking of them--which is to radicalize hermeneutics or to radicalize metaphor. The movement of hermeneutics is backward, that is, from a method, through interpretation itself, then finally toward what gives rise to interpretation. If science of language is the metaphysics of language, this backward stepping [Schritt zurück] goes "from metaphysics into the essence of metaphysics," which has not been thought before (ID, p. 44). Since it goes toward the unknown and unthought (which is the itinerary of metaphor as I will discuss later), this backtracking is also heading for an abyss [Abgrund]: "Being [Sein], however, because itself the ground, remains without ground" (PG, p. 218). Considering the importance of backtracking in Heidegger's thinking of language, it seems that the notion of a radical hermeneutics is to be attained in conjunction with it.

As Heidegger's analysis of language in terms of the totality of signification and the totality of fore-structures in Being and Time tends to end up with idle talk, discourse can move only within the closed totality of the signification or the disclosed [Lichtung], thereby the

circle being closed as in the case of "ther spatial hermenetutics of the metaphysical"<sup>15</sup>: idle talk "prevert[s] the act of disclosing [Erschliessen] into an act of closing off [Verschliessen] (BT, p. 213).<sup>16</sup> The notion of the closed totality presupposes the whole of the disclosed, which lies there as presence, and as such institutes a hermeneutical part and whole relation. This relation is spatial and structural. In order to overcome this spatial mode of a closed totality, Heidegger discusses an open totality in terms of death which is "the possibility of absolute impossibility of Dasein" (BT, p. 294).<sup>17</sup> This open totality is inclined toward the unknown and unpredictable future. For Heidegger, death tears Dasein away from its fascination with the idle talk of "They" and the totality of disclosed totality, and frees it into its

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<sup>15</sup> William Spano, "Heidegger, Kierkegaard, and the Hermeneutic Circle."

<sup>16</sup> In idle talk, we, Heidegger says, "do not so much understand the entities which are talked about; we already are listening only to what is said-in-the-talk as such. What is said-in-the-talk gets understood; but what the talk is about is understood only approximately and superficially. We have the same thing in view, because it is in the same averageness that we have a common understanding of what is said" (BT, p. 212). In the context of idle talk, everything is spoken already before speaking, and everything is understood already before understanding.

<sup>17</sup> Heidegger continues to say: "Thus death reveals itself as that possibility which is one's ownmost, which is non-relational, and which is not to be outstripped . . ." (*italic in the original*).

own futural potentiality. The separating force of death is contrasted to the binding force of the world to which Dasein belongs. And the Dasein's authentic confrontation with death is conceived as a momentum of cutting itself off from the inauthentic discourse and opening a possibility of authentic discourse. However, Heidegger could not develop fully this possibility of authentic discourse within the confines of Being and Time, as he failed to write Division Three assigned for the temporality of discourse. Now thirty-two years after the completion of Being and Time, Heidegger, in his work On the Way to Language (1959), seems to find a way toward authentic discourse with the notion of backtracking.<sup>18</sup>

For Heidegger, backtracking is concerned with the difference between beginning [Beginn] and origin [Anfang].<sup>19</sup> While the former is historical and epochal,

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<sup>18</sup> Otto Pöggeler therefore contrasts the early Heidegger's "empty and naked nothing," which is experienced by being guilty, in Being and Time with the later Heidegger's nothing as the shepherd of Being. While the former is merely to become free from the world and facticity, the latter is to be within "the expanse for what is totally other than man and nonetheless needs man, the space of the holy." See his Heidegger's Path of Thinking, 139. 173.

<sup>19</sup> See What is called thinking, 152. And for a fine analysis of the distinction between Beginn, Anfang, and Ursprung, see Schurmann, Heidegger on Being and Acting, 120-151. Here through this chapter I take Anfang and Ursprung under the same heading of origin according to the example of What is Called Thinking, where Heidegger does not differentiate between Anfang and Ursprung.

the latter, as something that gives rise to the former, is that which is concealed in the former's epochal history. What provokes thinking in regard to their relation is that a beginning takes place only with the oblivion or concealment of origin: the origin keeps itself concealed in the beginning. While the one determines, the other is that which is determined. Being historically and epochally determined and situated, a beginning does not know what determines and situates itself as such. And if beginning is what is given or presence, origin, then, is what is giving and presencing. Heidegger's backtracking is a call to turn from presence to presencing, from beginning to origin, from the determined to the determining. If one, being historically determined, finds himself thrown into the totality of signification and the worldhood of the world, by the act of backtracking he inquires into the origin of his thrownness and facticity.

In order for backtracking to be initiated, first of all one has to step back from the given totality or presence, which binds him. Even though one is given to that closed totality, the expectation of death and of nothing plays the role of liberator; the unknown future of death releases him from the binding grasp of the closed totality toward the untotalizable totality; "Death is the possibility of absolute impossibility of Dasein" (BT, p.

294). The moment that he is freed away from the totality, he is at the same time shifted from the spatial hermeneutics to the temporal hermeneutics. To put it in other words, being liberated from the given totality by the unknown future of death, Dasein can trace back to the essence of what constitutes the totality, into which he has been thrown. This in turn opens him toward a possibility of authentic discourse which moves in an open and untotalizable totality.

Heidegger's rejection of science or philosophy of language can be understood in conjunction with backtracking. When one begins to think of language, he finds himself already with some philosophical or scientific notions of language, since he is thrown into the pre-existing totality of meanings. Therefore, without knowing why, one is destined to think about language scientifically and philosophically and to interpret metaphor metaphysically. Before thinking, he has some ready-made answers and concepts about what is to be thought. Accordingly, even poetic metaphors are always translated into familiar ready-made concepts, thus undermining the very being of poetry as I will show later in my discussion of Heidegger's reading of Hölderline's and George's poems. Therefore, in order to enter into authentic discourse, one has to abandon all these ready-made concepts, constituted



by the philosophy or science of language. The presence of meanings are thus to be thrown away for the sake of their original presencing. Now the question is how this originary thinking is to take place.

Heidegger contrasts an experience with language [eine Erfahrung mit der Sprache] to science or philosophy of language. While the latter is to approach language with certain preconceptions and suppositions, the former is to "endure . . . , suffer . . . , receive [language] as it strikes us and submit to it" (OW, p. 57). In undergoing an experiencing with language, one does not approach language but, quite on the contrary, is greeted, approached, and claimed by it. Here Heidegger's formulation of experiencing with language appears to be indistinguishable from what he calls science or philosophy of language. Whenever one approaches language, it is with certain presuppositions, which are not of our own making. One is claimed by language for these presuppositions, so that what one says is rather spoken by language. Contrary to undergoing experience with language, one then is entangled within the system of language. This danger of misunderstanding Heidegger's call to experience with language is also the possibility of Dasein to fall into inauthenticity. If the danger is inherent in undergoing an experience with language, the problem with it is how one

can be claimed by language without falling into inauthenticity. For Heidegger, that problem is also the problem of common language, and as such he prefers silence to speaking as in Being and Time. It is only insofar as "language does not bring itself to language but holds back" that we are able to speak a language. In the same way that the beginning is not the origin, speaking is not the essence of language. Speaking, especially common speaking, may be a lapse into inauthenticity. Heidegger therefore finds the essence of language only in silence, only when "we cannot find the right word for something that concerns us, carries us away, oppresses or encourages us" (OW, p. 59). If we cannot speak, it is because the totality of signification (or of the disclosed), which binds us in idle talk, does not bind us any more, and we consequently are released into somewhere beyond the totality. This release is interpreted by Heidegger as directing toward the origin, thus the act of backtracking from the common language to the being of language: "Silence is the 'logic' of philosophy insofar as it asks the basic question from another beginning. It seeks the truth of the essencing of Being [Sein]--and this truth is the beckoning-suggestive concealment (the mystery) of the appropriative event."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> While quoting this passage from Heidegger's Beiträge zur Philosophie, Otto Pöggeler names as "Signetics" [Sigetik] the logic of the truth of Being which

When he asks us to be claimed by language in order to be under way toward language, Heidegger therefore has such a language of silence in mind, not language as a relational system of signs.<sup>21</sup>

### III

No matter how much importance Heidegger places on the discourse of silence, the problem with it is how silence can be spoken as silence. Unless it rings in the speaking of language, pure silence is the impossibility and death of language. Therefore, even silence has to be spoken, or is to be mediated by spoken language. In retrospect, Heidegger in Being and Time could not step beyond this

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makes silent. See Heidegger's Path of Thinking, 223.

<sup>21</sup> Here Heidegger's "silence" is not to be confused with what he speaks of the unsaid or the hidden riches of language. The former is the unsayable and as such is an abysmal ground of language in its origin, whereas the latter is the implicative dimension or etymological richness of language. To put it another way, the former (Hermes) is the abysmal ground of the latter (hermeneutics). The difference between them is that the former is not linguistic at all, so that it has nothing to do with language as a system. As such, Gerald Bruns' explanation of Heidegger's unsaid, which I quote in order to contrast it to "silence," is not the unsayable, though he does not distinguish one from the other: "each word harbors, not just a meaning (a particularity of sense), but the sounds of every other word in the language, so that (if one were listening) one could not sound a word without hearing at the same time an infinitely reverberating vocabulary." See Heidegger's Estrangement, 142.

discourse of silence, and every discourse turned out to be either idle talk or silence. As such, he did not yet find the way to authentic discourse, which would bring silence into language.<sup>22</sup> Now in On the Way to Language, he abandons his former polarity of idle talk and silence, and moves into poetic discourse in order to find the ringing of silence. It is to poets that Heidegger looks to find the words which somehow bring silence into spoken language. Poetry may be a journey into the region of silence or the death of common language to which the poet has to go in order to write.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, he proposes to read Stefan George's poem "The Word." If the early Heidegger considered language from the perspective of philosophy in Being and Time, the later Heidegger discusses it from a

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<sup>22</sup> However, we should not ignore Heidegger's effort in Being and Time to bring silence to language. Ricoeur mentions about Heidegger's "labor of language," which "gives Being and Time a greatness that no subsequent work will eclipse." By labor of language, Ricoeur means "the effort to articulate in an appropriate manner the hermeneutic phenomenology that ontology enlists in its own behalf." See his Time and Narrative, vol. 3, 63, and also Erasmus Schöfer, "Heidegger's Language: Metalogical Forms of Thought and Grammatical Specialities."

<sup>23</sup> Karsten Harries in "Language and Silence: Heidegger's Dialogue with George Trakl" finds the place of poetry in between "idle talk and silence." As he reformulates that relation between silence and poetry, poetry "is a recovery of silence in the midst of idle talk" (164).

totally different perspective of poetry. Now philosophy is thought and interpreted in terms of poetry.<sup>24</sup>

However, Heidegger's turning away from philosophy toward poetry does not mean that he forsakes the philosophical language for the sake of the poetical or that he distinguishes ontically one from the other. In his proposing a reading of George's poem, he therefore attempts to find a certain connection and continuity between them, lest they are presented as totally different modes of language which have their independent assigned places in the system of language. Thus what concerns Heidegger is the question of how the transition from the scientific language to the poetic is to be effected. If one has to undergo an experience with language, it is because it will transform his relation to language; what is wrong is not the language itself, but our relation to it. This transformation is the transformation of scientific and assertive language into what is called by some

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<sup>24</sup> Heidegger's notion of poetry is not poetry as a genre of literature, or as verse as prose. He does not privilege poetry as a genre against other genres of writing, such as discursive or fictional writings. Heidegger tends to go beyond such distinctions, as the following observation indicates: "What is needed in the present world crisis is less philosophy, but more attentiveness in thinking; less literature, but more cultivation of the letter" (LH, p. 242).

"hermeneutical" or poetic language.<sup>25</sup> If one is to transform his relation to language, he has to unburden the commonness attached to it and restore it to its original possibilities, which Heidegger calls Saying [Sage].<sup>26</sup> This unburdening and releasing process for Heidegger is backtracking, that is, to trace the scientifically and metaphysically destined history of being of language.

In order to find the original being of language and extract it from the common metaphysical language, Heidegger makes a distinction between word [Wort] and terms [Wörter].<sup>27</sup> Terms are like dictionary entries: their meanings are already disclosed within the totality of terms. As such, Heidegger compares terms to "buckets and kegs from which we scoop a content that is there" (130).

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<sup>25</sup> Theodore Kisiel in "The Language of the Event: The Event of Language" defines hermeneutical language as "the language which orients itself 'primal tidings' of the aboriginal event, which 'speaks' silently, by withholding itself" (96). This hermeneutical language is what Heidegger describes as man's "bearing of message and tidings," as we have discussed earlier.

<sup>26</sup> For a discussion of Saying, see John Sallis, "Toward a Showing of Language," and his another essay, "Language and Reversal."

<sup>27</sup> As David White suggests, the translation of das Wort as word can be misleading, since it has not only a designation of a single word, but also has "the connotation of a phrase, a proposition, or even a set of propositions." Though saying seems to be a more appropriate translation for das Wort, he reserves it for Heidegger's another term Sagen. See Heidegger and Language of Poetry, 22-23.

What is to be spoken is already given there, and therefore all speaking tends to be idle talk. Quite contrary to the disclosed totality of meanings in terms, words lead into disclosing: "Words are wellsprings that are found and dug up in the telling, wellsprings that must be found and dug up again and again, that easily cave in, but that at times also well up when least expected" (130). While meanings in terms are there already as ready-made present-at-hand, meanings in words have to be found and dug up. The nature of words is not presence, but presencing [Anwesen], not entity, but act or movement, not noun but verb. When the gathered water, after the act of welling up comes to an end, stays like a standing reserve, it tends to stagnate and rot. This staying lies there, while stagnating, and is finally to be exhausted by use. Heidegger calls this staying water "terms." The continuity between words and terms is unmistakable; the latter are the used-up and derivative mode of the former.

The relation of terms as derivative and used-up mode of words is also true of that of common language and poetry. While he conceives poetry as "the water that at times flows backward toward the source" (WC, p. 11), Heidegger finds that "everyday language is a forgotten and therefore used-up poem" (PL, p. 208). Common language, while used and employed time and time again, happens to

forget its origin, poetry. Then common language is a fallen mode of poetry, and a destined site of poetry sent by the history of metaphysics. The wellspring of poetry was blocked by metaphysics, and thus poetry turned into common language, which coincided with the transformation of presencing into presence. Therefore, even in Being and Time, Heidegger proposes to liberate language from grammar and logic of metaphysics, so that language can be open toward its source.<sup>26</sup> His proposal to liberate language from the limitation of metaphysics is another expression to think backward toward the source and origin. Now the question to be asked is how language can be liberated from metaphysics and how language can restore its original poetry.

The task of restoring the forgotten poetry in common language for Heidegger is no less than to undergo an

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<sup>26</sup> Heidegger says that "Grammar sought its foundations in the 'logic' of this logos. But this logic was based upon the ontology of the present-at-hand" (OW, p. 209)

Otto Pöggeler offers a very fine explanation of the inseparable relation of the ontology of the present-at-hand, traditional logic, and metaphysical language. As he summarizes, the logic of the present-at-hand "allows one to think logically about only those aspects of objects which can always be brought before thinking as constantly present-at-hand; constantly, it does not allow time and history into Being itself" (219). Pöggeler opposes this logic of present-at-hand to "hermeneutical logic," which understands Being historically and temporally. See Martin Heidegger's Path of Thinking, 218-227. And for more discussion of the relation of grammar, logic, and metaphysics, see Reiner Schürmann, Heidegger, 275-281.



authentic experience with language. However, the way toward original language is troublesome and is often interrupted. He always finds himself doing something other than experiencing with language, and sometimes has to remind himself that "in fact we would already have forgotten the whole point: to undergo an experience with language" (OW, p. 63). Or he at his best does no more than "sum up the experience the poet [Stefan George] has undergone with the word, instead of entering into the experience itself" (OW, p. 67). To undergo an experience is thus to be deferred. Since he thinks he is not on the way to language, he proposes to give the title "The Nature of Language" a question mark, because the title is too audacious and assertive. But as soon as a question mark is given to the original title, he finds that even the meaning of nature as well as that of language remains in the dark. The transformation of the title finally happens to "make the title disappear" (OW, p. 77). While he changes the title of the essay and confesses his inability to enter into an experience of language, he nevertheless happens to recognize that even his inability and confusion is already "borne up by the grant of what is to come into question," that is, language (OW, p. 75). Even though he failed to explain what an experience with language is, he finds himself already on the way to language by the grant of

language itself. The essence of language withholds and does not render itself into any thematic assertion or statements, so that Heidegger's inability to speak about language is conceived as an indication that he undergoes an experience with language, though without knowing how or why.

If language withholds its nature, any discourse of and about language tends to be illegitimate, not excluding Heidegger's essays on language. Since language holds back its nature, discourse about language cannot have any claim to truth in a metaphysical sense. Despite the fact that language withholds while disclosing, science or philosophy of language says as if it is all disclosing. Whenever one talks about language, he has to acknowledge that his discourse is possible because language withholds itself. When this withholding nature of language is forgotten, it becomes metaphysical. We propose and assert with language. That which is put into question by the conception that language withholds its nature is the very nature of assertion or literal language. The question is how is it possible that a sentence means what it says if language holds back its nature. What a sentence proposes to disclose is only partially realized, since all disclosure is always accompanied by withholding. Therefore, the meaning of a sentence never coincides with itself, which is

the problem of metaphor. There is always an unknowable withholding in any sentence, which interrupts the co-happening of saying with meaning. Discourse moves on the horizon of gap and difference: what it proposes to say is never brought to fulfillment. Here discourse is essentially metaphoric.

Since discourse does not coincide with itself, Heidegger's final title, "The being of language--the language of being," which he suggests after many transformations, is characterized as imposition [Zumutung].<sup>29</sup> The gap between what the title says and what it means is pointed out by the term "imposition," which emphatically reveals the audacious and imposing character of assertion or proposition, which claims to mean what it says. If all assertion is mere imposition, there arises the profound difficulty of discourse: if discourse cannot

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<sup>29</sup> About imposition, Reiner Schürmann says: "The 'ordinarily' held convergence between language and being is an imposition, a mere corollary to the position of man at the center of the knowable. Such 'bending together' (convergere) thus turns out to be the violent act par excellence from which Western civilization was born." See Heidegger, 275-76. Because of such violence inherent within any discourse, in the end of his essay "Time and Being" Heidegger tends to think that discourse functions as an obstacle to what it attempts to say if we are not aware of that danger: "Our task is unceasingly to overcome the obstacles that tend to render such saying [saying of Appropriation] inadequate. The saying of Appropriation in the form of a lecture remains itself an obstacle of this kind. The lecture has spoken merely in propositional statements" (*italics added*) (24).

mean what it says, how then is it to be materialized and interpreted? However, as Heidegger says, in order to avoid such a difficulty, we cannot and should not "shun the trouble and the risk of speaking about language" (50). Though at the risk of audacity and imposition, language nevertheless has to be ventured. As for assertion, it has taken such trouble and risk in a way to objectify language, it thus forgets its withholding nature. Therefore, what is to be sought is to venture into speaking, but in a different way from assertion, so that the withholding nature of language is to be preserved.

Throughout "The Nature of Language," and "A Dialogue on Language," Heidegger's effort to find a mode of discourse which is open to the withholding nature of language leads him to take language as not as signs or assertions, but as hints [Winken], which is, as I will argue later, the essence of metaphor. While he distinguishes hints from signs, he defines the latter as having its "habitat in metaphysics" (OW, p. 26). Given the relational system of signs, the meaning of a word is present within that system. Language is intralinguistic. In opposition to the structuralistic tendency to see words as signs, and in order to overcome it, Heidegger proposes to take words as hints, guiding words, or escorts (OW, p. 95). If signs present their meanings as something present-

at-hand in the given totality of signification, hints do not have answers to what they are supposed to say. When words are conceived as hints, their meanings are absent at the present moment so that the speaker of them is related to their meanings in a way of waiting. If signs have their structural foundation upon presence, hints are based on presencing [Anwesen] and absencing [Abwesen]. As such, the structure of hints is that of difference, gap, and deferral.<sup>30</sup> "The being of language, the language of being," Heidegger's new title to "The Nature of Language," is constituted of such a differential and deferral structure. Though Heidegger names the title as such, its meaning is still to arrive, and what it imposes is not what it means. If this deferral and differential structure is taken out of account, Heidegger's language would fall into metaphysics, and his discourse would turn language into a mere object.

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<sup>30</sup> Here I am fully aware of a possible objection to my description of a saying in sign language, which is rendered to coincide with its meaning. Even the meaning of a sign is not present, and has to wait until all meanings of the other signs are brought into light, since signs are structured by the system of difference. However, what I propose to prove is that this gap between a sign and its meaning is constituted within the totality of signification, which has its foundation upon the ontology of present-at-hand. Thus, the gap in signs can be said to be something to be overcome and to be bridged. But seen from the perspective of language in hints, the gap is essential and authentic.

The difference between signs and hints is not merely linguistic, but has temporal and spatial implications. If in language as signs saying is hypothetically expected to coincide with meaning, the word is already what it designates and proposes. Ideally speaking, to say is to have possession of what it signifies. But this simultaneous (hypothetical) co-presence of saying and the signified is possible only when language is conceived as the system of representation. Since representation represents what is representable, that is, something constantly present-at-hand, the other of the represented is left out, and does not enter into consideration. Here what is left out is presencing and absencing, which in turn constitutes authentic temporality and spatiality.<sup>31</sup> Therefore the space and time of representation is oriented toward presence. It is because of this presence centered space and time that a saying in language as signs can coincide with its meaning. The direction to which Heidegger turns his attention by his proposal to see words as hints is toward this left-out dimension of representational language. While a saying in representation is incapable of reaching beyond presence,

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<sup>31</sup> After briefly discussing the traditional metaphysical conception of time and space in the end of "The Nature of Language," Heidegger contrasts it with his own. See OW, pp. 102-03.

and thus falls back upon itself, the same saying, if taken as hints, instigates an act of turning away from presence toward presencing and absencing. In that act of turning away and toward, space and time, whose distance has been brought near to the degree of their annihilation as a result of representation, have to be restored to their own proper space and time, where what is named by words dwell.<sup>32</sup> The act of turning then is crossing across and journeying in the space and time. Being given into that act of turning and crossing, the meaning of saying is destined to be delayed and deferred.

Since hints have to cross the space and time toward what they propose to mean, Heidegger renders them as that which is in need of "the widest sphere in which to swing" (OW, p. 27).<sup>33</sup> The movement of hints is like a to and fro movement between a word and what is named by it. The

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<sup>32</sup> In his essay "The Thing" Heidegger discusses the "abolition of all distances" as a result of man's representational thinking, which results in the annihilation of things." See PL, pp. 165-86.

<sup>33</sup> From now on, when I refer to this region of space and time, I will use the word time-space, which Heidegger coins in order to show the unity between them. Time-space is also called "temporal space" [Seitraum] in his "Remembrance of the Poet." As William Richardson points out, "this domain is not, of course, 'space' but rather that dimension out of which even space and time themselves come-to-presence." See his Heidegger, 6. Bruns sees this non-spatial space as an event or a taking place [Erignis], which is "temporalized as a worlding and a thinging." See Heidegger's Estrangement, 93.

movement is on the horizon of appearing and presencing but also hiding and absencing. Heidegger thus calls the movement of hints enigmatic, since "they beckon to us, [but at the same time] they beckon away" (italics in original) (OW, p. 26): "the hint is the message of the veiling that opens up" (OW, p. 44). This dual moment of veiling and opening-up is well summarized by the term "the spiritual pointer" or "spiritual index finger," which Heidegger borrows from Jean Paul's writing. One points at something by his finger in order to turn another's attention to what is pointed at. If the other is to follow the meaning of the directed finger, he has to turn to it only in order to turn away from it immediately. Instead of the finger presenting and bringing a designated thing to the one who attends to it, it merely indicates toward and hints at the thing which is not ready-to-hand. Therefore, one who is to follow the message of the finger has to leave it behind for reaching beyond what it indicates. This act of reaching beyond is the act of crossing the wide space between the finger and the thing indicated by it. However, in the very nature of the message of the finger there lies a danger that the finger itself can be taken as the message. The danger is that instead of instigating a journey into its direction, the finger may bind men to itself so that it becomes self-reflexive. Wherever hints are taken as signs,



there lies the danger. Because of this danger, Heidegger, it seems, warns readers against taking the phrase "house of Being," which he uses for hinting at the nature of language in "Letter on Humanism," as a concept of the nature of language. If the phrase is conceived as a concept, not as a hint, it comes to designate "a shelter erected earlier somewhere or other, in which Being, like a portable object, can be stored away" (OW, p. 26). As such, the phrase "house of Being" does not instigate a to and fro movement, and becomes nothing more than the finger which returns to itself--therefore Heidegger has to give up that phrase.

Heidegger's proposal to take words as hints, which initiates a journey (which I will call the itinerary of metaphor) into what is named by them, is one of the results of his attempt at backtracking thinking. If the essence of backtracking is to turn away from the beginning toward the origin, and from presence toward presencing and absencing, words as hints seem to provide a way toward such backtracking. As common language is used-up poetry, words as signs are those words which withdraw into themselves after losing their outreaching movements toward what are named by them. In order to restore this to and fro movement between words and things, one then has to change his relation to language so that language itself can speak. If language speaks, it speaks in a way of deferral and

difference: its meaning does not coincide with its speaking. This language of deferral and difference is hint-words as distinguished from the language of presence in sign-words.<sup>34</sup> The meaning of hint-words lies in the future--which reflects Heidegger's giving a priority to future against present as in Being and Time. The sign-words serve only as a momentum for returning by way of hint-words to what gives rise to them.

If hint words move in the wide sphere where things withdraw and appear, this movement is not a mere wandering. This sphere is not an empty space from one end of which to the other end words have to cross, but time-space in which words follow the trace [Spur] of things. As Heidegger says about the fourfold in "What are Poets for," poets, by singing of gods in their poems, begin to follow the trace of retreating gods, while staying on their tracks (PL, p. 94). In the same way that poets trace the tracks of the fugitive gods, hint-words move on the trace of what they name. If words are taken as hints, it is because the trails of things are not yet completely raised, and because words still are capable of outreaching toward things. Along with the trails of things is language on the way toward these things. As such, in time-space "what

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<sup>34</sup> For the sake of brevity, I coined the words "sign-words" and "hint-words," each referring to "words as signs" and "word as hints" respectively.

withdraws from us, draws us along by its very withdrawal (WC, p. 9). In this context, signs in their nature are hints, and man, as Heidegger puts it, is a sign that draws toward what withdraws.

Now the relation between the spoken and silence can be explained in terms of hint-words' to-and-fro movement in time-space. If the spoken, as Heidegger says, stems from the unspoken, it is because the spoken is not spoken yet (OW, p. 120), and because what it says is not yet what it means. In order that the spoken is to be actually spoken, it has to cross the wide sphere of time-space to which it is addressed. The speaking is a bidding or calling of something absent to show [Sagen] itself, not a commanding of something present to respond to it.<sup>35</sup> Then the difference of what a word says and what it means, or briefly metaphor, constitutes the difference between speaking and silence; metaphor has its space between the spoken and silence. In a way that backtracking is a

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<sup>35</sup> "Mortal speech is a calling that names, a bidding which, out of the simple onefold of the difference, bids thing and world to come. What is purely bidden [heißen] in mortal speech is what is spoken in the poem" (PL, p. 208).

In his essay on Heidegger "The Problem of Language," which deserves a careful study, Volkmann-Schluck explains such a bidding nature of language in terms of mythical truth, or the Greek epic poets' appeal to the Muses. According to his explanation, epic poets are attendants of Muses, and when the former speaks, "the actual speakers are not the poets, but the Muses, daughters of the highest god" (123).

movement along the trails from words to things, it is at the same time a tracing movement from speaking toward silence. Things do not speak. Instead, they, being themselves Stillness [Stille], use or appropriate the speaking of man in order to be sounded (PL, p. 208). Therefore, man in speaking metaphorically responds to the stillness, and is able to move in time-space toward it.

The difference between saying and meaning or between speaking and silence is not only linguistic, but ontological, which implies that metaphor is not merely rhetorical, but ontological. It is linguistic, since it marks the distinction between words and terms, hints and signs, and poetry and common language. Difference in this linguistic dimension constitutes an etymological backtracking, a stepping backward from the fallen mode of language to its poetic possibilities.<sup>36</sup> But this linguistic difference is rooted in a fundamental and ontological difference. The difference is ontological, because it is derived from the very nature of language (or of Being), which withdraws at the very moment of

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<sup>36</sup> While observing Heidegger's etymological concern, in his essay "La Mots et Les Roses" Jean Greisch comments that Heidegger privileges "la diachronie au profit du système." However, Jean Greisch distinguishes Heidegger's etymological backtracking from "un étymologisme grossier" in a way resembling the latter's distinction of the origin from the beginning: "Pour retrouver l'origine, il faut s'intéresser à l'histoire des mots, mais l'origine pour le philosophe ne coïncide pas avec le commencement" (449).

disclosing. Difference for Heidegger is, therefore, Unter-Schied, scission, or division, which prevails in the midst of and in the between of world and thing, and Being and beings. In his essay "Language," Heidegger speaks of difference by its Greek term, diaphora: "the unifying element of the diaphora, the carrying out that carries through," to which we will return later for our discussion of metaphor (OW, p. 202). By emphasizing the unity of the difference, he warns us from taking it as a separation of things from world, or of beings from Being. If difference is understood as a separation of them and joining them together again, it would mean that we would fall into a metaphysical interpretation. Because of this metaphysical danger, Heidegger, after The Essence of Reason, begins to abandon his notion of the ontological difference, through which Dasein and Being were analyzed in Being and Time, lest the unity of difference be destroyed.<sup>37</sup>

#### IV

Heidegger's conception of language, difference, and Being in our foregoing discussion is what he attains as a result of his thinking dialogue with George's poem "The

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<sup>37</sup> For the discussion of Heidegger's ontological difference, see Pöggeler, Martin Heidegger's Path of Thinking, 117-131, and Joseph Kockelmans, "Ontological Difference, Hermeneutics, and Language."

Word." By entering into such a dialogue, he is admitted into listening to the speaking of language, which takes place in the poem. Since the poet already "put[s] into language the experience he undergoes with language," Heidegger in thinking follows the trace of that poetic experience (OW, p. 59). As the poet, by undergoing an experience, has transformed his relation with language, so does Heidegger. But they speak of this transformation in a different way: while the poet sings in a poem, Heidegger says in discourse. Something striking in Heidegger's conducting a dialogue with the poem of the poet is the reversal of the traditional order of relation between them. Contrary to the traditional order that poetry approached philosophy for its justification, now the latter in Heidegger is going toward the former. Formerly, since poetry is essentially figurative, thus lacking clarity and distinctiveness, it had to be judged and evaluated by the literal language or the standard of philosophy in order that its value was to be socially accepted and recognized. Philosophy has been the judge of poetry. However, now with Heidegger, who warns himself against "reduc[ing] poetry to the servant's role as documentary proof for our thinking," philosophy seeks its own evaluation by the saying of poetry, and is willing to be appropriated by the latter

(OW, p. 63).<sup>38</sup> The language of philosophy now enters into a dialogue with the language of poetry.

Heidegger's question of the relation between poetry and thinking dominates the whole essay. When he raises the question, it is because the relation, though so often discussed and mentioned as to become "a vacuous cliché," has not been thought nor treated properly (PW, p. 81). If poetry has been ancillary to philosophy, it is the historical destination of Western metaphysics. Thus being determined by metaphysics, the real essence of the relation has not been thought yet. Therefore, what Heidegger proposes in his reading of George's poem is to backtrack such destinal history and then to obtain their original relation. This backtracking journey of Heidegger's thinking is guided by the figurative language of poetry. As such, Heidegger's revaluation of the traditional order between philosophy and poetry implies also a radical reevaluation of the nature and relation of the literal and

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<sup>38</sup> Heidegger often warns against any interpretation of poetry which does not efface itself in front of poetry: "in order that what has been purely written of in the poem may stand forth a little clearer, the explanatory speech must break up each time both itself and what it has attempted. The final, but at the same time the most difficult step of every exposition consists in vanishing away together with its explanations in the face of the pure existence of the poem" (RM, pp. 234-35). In a very provoking essay "Thinking and Poetizing in Heidegger," Henri Birault comments on this paradoxical relation of explanation (which speaks only in order to vanish away) to poetry.

the metaphorical. If the metaphorical in the tradition, has been judged by its possible return to the literal, Heidegger's reversal seems to suggest a certain way to account for the being of metaphor without forcing it to the literal. To this question of the relation between them, our foregoing discussion of Heidegger's distinction between words and terms, or hints and signs, seems to suggest many possible answers. Now in this second part of the chapter, I will attempt to answer that question by reading George's poem along with Heidegger, by focusing on the latter's hermeneutical relation to the poem's metaphorical language. In my rereading Heidegger's reading of the poem, I will try to see how his distinctions effect his relation to metaphor, without the clarification of which our question cannot be answered.

In proposing a thinking experience with George's poem, Heidegger first differentiates his practice of reading from any philosophical one. Since philosophy tends to "force the vibration of the poetic saying into the rigid groove of a univocal statement," Heidegger asks us to keep away from such an dangerous inclination (OW, p. 64). However, this seeming depreciation of philosophy does not lead to a rejection of philosophical discourse. For it has its own particular value and justification different from poetic



discourse. As such, the distinction between the philosophical and the poetical is the reflection of the distinction between sign-words and hint-words. After such a differentiating warning, Heidegger quotes George's poem and begins to enter into a thinking dialogue with it.

George's poem "The Word" reads:

Wonder or dream from distant land  
I carried to my country's strand

And waited till the twilit norn  
Had found the name within her bourn--

Then I could grasp it close and strong  
It blooms and shines now the front along...

Once I returned from happy sail,  
I had a prize so rich and frail,

She sought for long and tidings told:  
"No like of this these depths enfold."

And straight it vanished from my hand,  
The treasure never graced my land...

So I renounced and sadly see:  
Where word breaks off no thing may be.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Das Wort

Wunder von ferne oder traum  
Bracht ich an meines landes saum

Und harrte bid die graue norn  
Den namen fand in ihrem born--

Drauf konnt ichs greifen dicht und stark  
Nun blüht und glänzt es durch die mark...

Einst langt ich an nach guter fahrt  
Mit einem kleinod reich und zart

Sie suchte lang und gab mir kund:  
"So schläft hier nichts auf tiefem grund"

Heidegger's reading of the poem is concerned primarily with the last two lines, especially the last one. Therefore, as soon as he takes the poem into consideration, he skips all proceeding lines and begins to inquire into the meanings of the last line, as if all the other lines were crystallized into the last one. His reading, which does not claim to be scientific, proposes to understand and interpret the other lines only in the light of the last one. Here one might raise an objection to Heidegger's reading with the question of how he can understand the last line without understanding the previous lines. Though this objection, being based on the circular nature of understanding, is valid, it is also problematic, since it again gives rise to another related question of where to begin. One is destined to begin with only one of the lines, which constitute the whole poem: they cannot be discussed simultaneously all together. Granted such a nature of a circle, Heidegger's practice of reading the poem with the last line is not so problematic as it appears. The implication of that practice should be found somewhere

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Worauf es meiner hand entrann  
Und nie mein land den schatz gewann...

So lernt ich traurig den verzicht:  
Kein ding sei wo das wort gebricht.

else. If he can begin with any of the lines of the poem, Heidegger's particular beginning from the end indicates the direction where his experience of the poem is moving. His primary concern of the essay leads him to spotlight and focus the last two lines while the rest seems to remain in the background. As his new title to the essay "The being of language--the language of being" suggests, his concern is with the relation of word with thing, and his following focusing on the last line with the central words "word" and "thing" is quite natural.

Since he intends to "bring us face to face with a possibility of undergoing a thinking experience with language," Heidegger takes the last two lines as the key and guide lines (or as metaphor as I will discuss later), and proposes a reading in that fashion. If the key lines are the last two lines, Heidegger's key words, in addition to "word" and "thing" in the last line, include one more word "name" in the fourth line. As such, his reading of the poem evolves around these guiding lines and words, which in turn are supposed to bring to light the meanings of the whole poem. To put it in terms of a hermeneutical circle, a part (these key words and lines) is supposed to explain the whole. If there is such a circle in Heidegger's guiding lines and words in their relation to the whole poem, it is so in a strange manner. Heidegger

appears to take the rest of the poem as almost self-evident so that their meanings do not require such heightened attention as given to the guiding words. While he enumerates in detail dictionary meanings of these guiding lines and words as a preliminary for their possible clarification, Heidegger summarizes the rest of the poem in a way that their meanings are not in question. Nonetheless, the key lines and words remain in the dark, like a deep abyss in the whole structure of the poem. If he checks dictionary meanings of these key lines, Heidegger does so only in order to show that the former do not provide any clue to the latter. Therefore, the key lines and words are more problematic and more enigmatic than any other lines or words. And if they are central words and lines in the poem, the center is abysmal and dark.<sup>40</sup>

If we are particularly concerned with his key words and lines, it is because they, though Heidegger does not say explicitly, are no other than hint-words, as opposed to sign-words of the other words and lines, and because his reading shows a process of how one is differentiated from

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<sup>40</sup> In his reading of Heidegger's reading of George's poem "The Word," Robert Bernasconi speaks of Heidegger's two different, but compatible readings of the last two lines of the poem. Seen from the context of our foregoing discussion of sign-words and hint-words, the first reading seems to be made on the dimension of sign-words, while the second on that of hint-words. See his The Question of Language in Heidegger's History of Being, 49-64.

the other. First of all, Heidegger's key words and lines indicate to the direction where his thinking is moving. As such, his proposal to undergo a thinking experience with language leads him to choose and decide these key words. This implies that though all words (sign-words) in the poem are capable of becoming key words (hint-words), only a few of them are appointed as such. The difference between hint-words and sign-words then is not something inherent within the nature of these words: the difference depends on the way of reading. The unbroken continuity between hint-words and sign-words is broken only on the level of reading. It is therefore on the horizon of reading that hint-words are differentiated from sign-words. And this differentiating act of reading is partly due to the very nature of a circle, that is, a part and whole relation. The whole, which reading itself cannot grasp, is always constructed by a part's relation to the projected whole on which reading is going on. And the part chosen by the act of reading becomes a leading guide, which in turn instigates a journey into the whole.

Heidegger's proposal to transform sign-words into hint-words in the act of backtracking thinking therefore does not mean a wholesale transformation. If all words in George's poem are taken as hint-words, the poem itself would turn out to be chaotic, and thus cannot initiate a

thinking experience. In a way that seeing involves focus and background in Husserl's phenomenology, reading is moving on the horizon of problematic hint-words which are given in the context of surrounding unproblematic sign-words. The latter ground the former, and allow it to swing to and fro. Thus the hint-words are grounded on the sign-words, not only in that the latter provide context to the former, but also in that the former themselves are the latter. However, though grounded on the surrounding sign-words whose meanings appear to be self-evident, hint-words function in a way of destructing that pre-given ground. Hint-words move into the silence of time-space, and therefore what they say cannot be what they mean. As such, this part (hint-words), though given in a hermeneutic circular structure, does not return to the projected whole of the sign-words which ground it. Hint-words carry the other surrounding sign-words into their journey into their original relation with things.

To undergo an experience with language is to follow the movement of hint-words, which in turn follow the trace of the withdrawing things. Heidegger's essay itself is a demonstration of how patiently and thoughtfully he follows in the path of these hint-words. In thinking of "word," "thing," or "name," he quite often leaves the poem as a whole behind and strands himself in the realm of the

mysterious relation between them. However, this seeming turning away from the poem in order to turn to the guiding hint-words appears to be rather a more essential turning back to the poem itself. It is because the poem itself for Heidegger is constituted of nothing other than "the mysteriousness of that relation [of word to thing], which reveals itself as mystery ..." (OW, p. 79). In order to experience the mystery of the relation, that is, in order to return to the meaning of the poem as a whole, one, it seems, has to leave the poem for guiding words, as the poet has to renounce his former relation to language for the sake of experiencing the being of language. Heidegger explains this dialectic of leaving and returning in terms of the nature of way [Weg]:

it [way] leads us only to where we already are. The 'only' here does not mean a limitation, but rather points to this way's pure simplicity. The way allows us to reach what concerns us, in that domain where we are already staying. Why then, one may ask, still find a way that at the same time we are not there, because we ourselves have not yet properly reached what concerns our being, not even approached it. The way that lets us reach where we already are, differing from all other ways, calls for an escort that runs far ahead. That escort is implied in the key words ... (OW, p. 93).

When one reads the poem, he, instead of listening to the speaking of language, finds only common meanings in it. Though one is already in the saying of the poem, he is so in an inappropriate way. However, it does not mean that the speaking of language in the poem totally ceases to

speaking, since that speaking leaves some trace behind it. In order to restore oneself to the speaking of language, one has to follow that trace of withdrawing language along with the guide of hint-words. This is no other than a returning to the essence of the poem.<sup>41</sup>

If language is not nothing nor a thing, but a wide swinging between the two extremes, it then can be either a vacuity of common language or a genuine saying. Heidegger in Being and Time contrasts authentic discourse (discourse of conscience) to inauthentic discourse (idle talk). According to Being and Time, Heidegger's authentic discourse is totally silent, while its opposite is a continuous talk. Since between the two lies no bridge to connect the abyss and authentic discourse is the death of inauthentic discourse, Heidegger could not develop any further the possibility of speaking authentic discourse.

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<sup>41</sup> Here I do not want to raise a question about the legitimacy of Heidegger's reading strategy. His reading seems not to be faithful to the poem itself as a whole, and reads too much into it to the extent that the poem is estranged from itself. But it should be remembered that Heidegger's goal of reading is not to read correctly, but to read essentially, as he distinguishes what is correct [Richtiges] from what is essential [Wesenhafte] (98). Therefore, Heidegger's reading of George's poem can be said to resembles with Kant's reading of Plato, which "would have to get a straight F," but "has creatively transformed Plato's doctrine of ideas" (WC, p. 77). For a fine analysis of the "marginal character" of Heidegger's reading, see John Sallis, Spacings of Reason and Imagination: in Texts of Kant, Fichte, Hegel, fn. 2, 163-64.



But now in Heidegger's conception of language in On the Way to Language, the seeming abyss between authentic and inauthentic discourse is bridged by guide words, and the former is allowed to find its voice. This shift in Heidegger's conception of language is partially due to his growing interest with poetry, and due to the following insight into a discourse radically other than that of scientific or philosophical language. This authentic discourse is poetic discourse, which instigates a journey into the Stillness of things, silence or death of common language (within the context of Being and Time): "As language falls apart, contact with being is reestablished."<sup>42</sup> In a way that one expects death or nothingness only in order authentically to return to the world to which one is thrown, one leaves behind the commonly understood meanings of words in the poem and along with the guide of hint-words enters into the region of the

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<sup>42</sup> Karsten Harries, "Metaphor and Transcendence," in On Metaphor, 88. In discussing this dual moment of the falling apart of language and the advent of being, Harries relies on Hugo von Hofmannsthal's essay "Lord Chandon Letter," which describes such moments by a metaphor of "a half-filled pitcher," "an epiphany of transcendence." Harries goes on to say that "The pursuit of presence has to make the poet's progress a journey towards silence," and quotes Mallarmé: "poem should be silent, white" (76). Such a poetic desire for silence and stillness is found even in T. S. Eliot's Burnt Norton: "Only by the form, the pattern,/ Can words or music reach/ The stillness, as a Chinese jar still/ Moves perpetually in its stillness" (121).

mysterious relation between words and things, but only in order to return to the poem.

Heidegger's turning away from the sign-words and turning toward hint-words underlies the distinction between assertion [Aussage] and Saying [Sage]. The "Aus" in Aussage, as signifying the outward movement from the inside, or completing or concluding of certain state of affairs, implies a historical determination of Sage. As "Aus" signifies a one actualization of diverse potentialities of something, Aussage for Heidegger is a metaphysical destination of Sage in the Western history of thinking. This destined movement of Sage into Aussage coincides with the historical transformation of to ti estin into "nature" or essentia and finally as the concept, or with the historical destination of Aletheia into logos, reason, representation or will. As such, Sage as showing in early Greek thinking has come to the metaphysically determined destination, Aussage as assertion or sign-words. Assertion is, therefore, a metaphysical conception of language, thus being grammatical and logical. If all these historically determined paths of Aletheia, to ti estin, or Sage are taken into consideration, Heidegger's attempt at backward thinking is no doubt an attempt to go beyond logic and grammar so that language can disengage itself from the

metaphysical subjugation of assertion. Therefore, when he discusses metaphor, Heidegger first has to situate it in the context of metaphysics before finding its authentic dimension of Saying and hint-words.

Heidegger in "The Nature of Language" finds the metaphysical foundation of metaphor in Aristotle's conception of language in On Interpretation. As Heidegger briefly formulates, Aristotle sees that "the sounds are signs of mental experiences, and these are the signs of things" (OW, p. 97). Here the linguistic structure of signs is based on mental representation of things so that when one speaks it (the sensuous side of language) is mediated by mental representation (the non-sensuous spirit of language). Heidegger finds this division of the sensuous and the non-sensuous to be metaphysical, and the division as such does not do justice to the unity between the two.<sup>43</sup> Heidegger demonstrates his objection to that division with the melody and rhythm of language, which reminds of "the way of speaking" in Being and Time: "It is just as much a property of language to sound and ring and vibrate, to

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<sup>43</sup> As one of the reasons for the unity of the sensuous and the non-sensuous, Heidegger in Der Satz vom Grund as well as in Being and Time (207) points out the fact that we always hear words as words, not as pure physical sound, even when we fail to understand them. As for Der Satz vom Grund, see Ronald Bruzina's translation in his "Heidegger on Metaphor and Philosophy," 187, and also Jean Greisch's discussion of it in "Les Mots et Les Roses," 440.

hover and tremble, as it is for the spoken words of language to carry a meaning" (OW, p. 98). Since the melody and rhythm of speaking as in song is also part of its content, the rigorous distinction of the sensuous and the non-sensuous cannot be sustained. Heidegger's critic of that metaphysical distinction, however, is not to be taken as a total repudiation of the distinction. It has its own validity and right: "the tradition remains rich in truth" (OW, p. 96). Here what Heidegger suggests in that criticism is that the distinction, though valid in itself, is not original, but something destined by metaphysics and thus contained within it. It is in this context that for the task of backtracking thinking that distinction is to be overcome.

The task of overcoming the metaphysical distinction between the sensuous and the non-sensuous demands a thoroughgoing rethinking of the literal language, which is logical and grammatical. For Heidegger, this rethinking is essentially the problem of spatiality. If the dual distinction of the sensuous and non-sensuous is based on the distinction between the visible and the invisible, and the outside and the inside, it gives rise to further divisions, when it is applied to space. According to the metaphysical notion of space, "the measurement of the lengths...are always taken according to a yardstick by

which, along which, the number of units in the measured stretch is counted out" (OW, p. 102). Here the unit of a visible and sensuous yardstick measures the accordingly visible and sensuous space, which is therefore measurable, and then besides whether things are near or far away. This measurement by yardstick in turn gives rise to the compartmentalization of space into different regions where gods, man, animals or plants have their assigned dwellings. The unmeasurably separated distance lies between the earth and the heaven or the sky, as the distance between the divinity and the mortal. This compartmentalized space is also the space of logical order and grammar. In the same way that the sensuous is not the non-sensuous, the earth is not the sky, nor men gods. In the compartmentalized space, the earth is hopelessly separated away from the sky and men from gods. Whereas gods belong to the category of the divinity, men belong to another category of the mortal. Within the metaphysical order, discourse has to be in agreement with such categorical differentiation.<sup>44</sup> If

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<sup>44</sup> Ronald Bruzina rightly observes that the metaphorical transference presupposes "basic Aristotelian distinctions (e.g., the categories and the ultimate genera of substance, not to mention most importantly the division of his treatise according to orders of subject matter, such as logic, physics, study of the soul, study of being, etc.)." See "Heidegger on the Metaphor and Philosophy," 194.



"This 'like' [wie] is always a break in the vision, it adduces [es holt heran], it compares, it is not a primary statement . . .," it is a flagging of the tension of language [ein Nachlassen der sprachlichen Spannung], a weakness [Schwäche] of creative transformation" (OW, p. 100).

Though he quotes Benn's comment in order to distinguish his interpretation of metaphor from Benn's, Heidegger does not intend to put into question the validity of Benn's. Benn's interpretation for Heidegger occupies its right position within the metaphysical order. As for Benn, he takes the metaphysical spatial order for granted, and defines metaphor accordingly. Since words do not belong to the same spatial order with flowers, their combination is by way of metaphor. The different regions, though separated unbridgeably from one another, are mediated by a figurative convention and thus are brought together only metaphorically. As such, the last line for Benn cannot be taken as a primary statement--which implies the fact that the distinction between the metaphorical and the literal brings about another distinction between the secondary and the primary statement. According to Benn's interpretation, the poet, when he is unable to move from one region to another, calls for aid from Hermes, who crosses different regions. Like the ancient Greek god Hermes, the function of metaphor for Benn lies in breaking and crossing

the different regions in the compartmentalized space. However, this interpretation of metaphor presupposes the metaphysical concept of space, to which Heidegger's criticism of Benn is directed.

Benn's interpretation of metaphor is valid only on the horizon of sign-words, assertion, and metaphysics. While admitting this interpretation, Heidegger proposes to turn our attention to another horizon of language. If hint-words are a to and fro swinging movement between words and things, they, as discussed before, move in non-metaphysical space, that is, time-space. For Heidegger, this non-metaphysical space, which can never be measured by the unit of the yardstick, is the space of the fourfold. If Heidegger wants to go beyond the rigid distinction between the sensuous and the non-sensuous, it is because they, though are separated, are still held in unity, which metaphysics forgets in its tendency for differentiation. In the likewise manner, the seeming separation of the earth, the sky, the divinity, and the mortals (in our representational and metaphysical thinking) is still held in unity. Accordingly, if Hermes crosses different regions, it is due to the unity of the fourfold. The crossing of Hermes is not by breaking the boundaries of the compartmentalized space, but by finding and traveling within their unity. When metaphor is considered in this



context of the fourfold, "a 'break in the vision' [is] but the awakening of the largest views; nothing is 'adduced' here, but on the contrary the word is given back into the keeping of the source of its being...no lack here of a 'primary statement' [but] its inception" (OW, p. 100).<sup>47</sup> Thus metaphor for Heidegger carries metaphysics beyond itself into the mysterious space of the fourfold, as hint-words carry sign-words into the unknown region of things.

Heidegger's non-metaphysical interpretation of metaphor is not only proposed for his reading of Hölderlin's poem, but also for our reading of his discourse. It is needless to say that his discourse is woven with the matrix of metaphor. Before he discusses metaphor, Heidegger, for instance, describes the relation of mouth, the body, and the earth in a way that it verges on poetry:

But the mouth is not merely a kind of organ of the body understood as an organism--body and mouth are part of the earth's flow and growth in which we mortals flourish, and from which we receive the soundness of our roots...Language is the flower of the mouth. In language the earth blossoms toward the bloom of the sky (OW, pp. 98-99).

Here Heidegger's language is no doubt a blatant violation of the logic of metaphysics, and thus is non-sensical from

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<sup>47</sup> Jean Greisch gives a fine analysis of these Heidegger's characterizations of Hölderlin's metaphor, and remarks that they are the very non-metaphysical being of metaphor ("Les Mots et Les Roses," 443-44).

the logical point of view. All the differentiated order to things are broken and all seem to put into a chaotic melting pot, which annihilates all individuality. Language is rendered to be the flower of the mouth, which in return blooms like flowers. By undoing the differentiated order between language, flower, and mouth, this sentence seems to reduce all into one: language=the flower=the mouth. This equation transforms all words into a grand system of tautology.<sup>48</sup> In the unity of the fourfold, all words are

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<sup>48</sup> By the grand system of tautology I mean a mystic thinking that all differentiated sublunary phenomena of the world can be reduced into One, God, or Unity. Since all phenomena are supposed to participate to this Oneness, the former without exception share a certain degree of the latter, which thus serves as a common denominator for the former. If these various phenomena are conceived from the perspective of this Oneness, their difference comes to disappear and they are transformed into the same.

One of the most dramatic manifestations of this grand system of tautology is Buddhism's doctrine of transmigration. According to that doctrine, every thing, including man, is put into the circle of transmigration so that the differentiated present order of the world is only temporary. In his former lives, a man, for instance, might have been a tree, a rabbit, flower, an ant,... ad infinitum: theoretically speaking, he can be everything: "When we scrutinise our daily experiences, we realise that we have here everything we could experience by going through an indefinitely long period of transmigration. Every shade of feeling we have while on earth finds its counterpart somewhere in the heavens or in the hells or in some intermediate realms ...." Accordingly, in the doctrine of Buddhism all are conceived as brothers and sisters. They are one, and all their present differentiated forms do not have much significance. See Daisetz T. Suzuki, Mysticism: Christian and Buddhist, 88.

In suggesting a certain relation between Heidegger's thinking of the fourfold and the grand system of tautology, I am not identifying them. I just want to indicate some danger inherent in Heidegger's thinking of fourfold. At

unified into one word. And if all are one, we are free to say anything without falling into the danger of contradiction. This is an absolute metaphorical freedom. No doubt, Heidegger's language as in the above quotation cannot escape from such a danger of a grand system of tautology, which seems to be the inevitable consequence of the fourfold. By going back to the state of language before differentiation, Heidegger seems to destroy the system of language and then to render communication impossible. Considering the metaphoric nature of his discourse, this in turn is the problem of metaphor too. Since metaphor is not bound to logic and grammar of language, it may be free to say anything without any constraint; it can unbind all rules of language and thus move in the oneness of all words. Therefore, the problem

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this point, it may be observed that this danger is the danger inherent within the Romantic poets' and New Critics' conception of metaphor, metaphor as the unifying and totalizing function of poetry. As Murray Krieger explains in A Reopening of Closure, metaphor for New Critics was "the mystifying movement beyond difference," which "absorbes the others as it dissolves all distinctions into the world (and the world of language) ... as identity" (59). With the advent of deconstruction in America, such a danger of metaphoric annihilation of all difference has been undermined by de Man's rhetorical deconstruction of metaphor which converts a unifying metaphor into a disruptive metonymy: "the rhetorically self-conscious reading puts into question the authority of metaphor as a paradigm of poetic language...metaphor becomes a blind metonymy." See his Allegories of Reading, 102.

of how to understand Heidegger's discourse is also the problem of how to interpret metaphor.

However, the danger of Heidegger's language to fall into a grand system of tautology is real only when it is conceived from the metaphysical perspective. Heidegger takes pains to defend himself from such a possible misunderstanding. First of all, the "is" in the sentence "Language is the flower of the mouth" is not the "is" of assertion. While "is" of assertion is an equation of the two, thus erasing their difference, Heidegger's "is" is not that of equation or identity, but of sameness: "In identity difference disappears. In the Same difference appears" (ID, p. 38). "Is" is a hint-word, not a sign-word. "Is" therefore implies an openness of one to another while they preserve their own difference. To put it in terms of spatiality, "is" indicates a neighborhood or nearness between those which are connected by it, but not an annihilation of their distance.<sup>49</sup> In conjunction with such a neighborhood between things that are connected by "is," Heidegger proposes to reconsider the nature of metaphor, and to save it from its traditional subjugation to metaphysics. This proposal is also a measure to defend his

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<sup>49</sup> See On the Way to language, 102-106, and "The Thing," in Poetry, Language, Thought.

metaphorical discourse from reducing it into an absurd oneness or to the preexisting order of metaphysics.

Therefore, when Heidegger condemns metaphor, this condemnation is meant only for a metaphysical interpretation of metaphor: "It would mean that we stay bogged down in metaphysics if we were to take the name Hölderlin gives here to "words, like flowers" as being a metaphor" (OW, p. 100). As we have discussed already, the metaphysical space is defined in terms of yardstick measurement, and is thus divided into many different regions. This metaphysically ordered space gives rise to a categorical distinction, such as that of the sensuous and the non-sensuous or that of the mortals and the divinity. From the perspective of metaphysics, metaphor ignores and destroys these spatial distinctions and categories, since it does not obey the rules and principles governing the space. In order to protect itself from such a threat, metaphysics, according to our discussion of the closed totality and metaphor in the previous chapter, has to appropriate even metaphor into itself, whose task is accomplished by way of interpretation. If metaphor in Greek is a movement to cross and transfer, thus a movement from the metaphysical order to a non-metaphysical, that stepping beyond or crossing movement of metaphor then has to be controlled and put back within metaphysics. In the

metaphoric phrase "words, like flowers," for example, the former is non-sensuous, but the latter is sensuous. And the words belong to the region of humanity whereas flowers to that of the earth or the plants. According to the order of metaphysics, "words" therefore cannot be brought together with "flowers"; the latter is carried over into another different region, which is not compatible with it. Hence this misplaced word "flowers" has to be brought back to its original region of the earth and the plants. However, this sending back of "flowers" into its original region leaves behind it a void in the phrase "words, like flowers." To replace this void is called an interpretation of metaphor: the void is filled with some non-sensuous word corresponding to the non-sensuousness of "words." If metaphor carries over some words beyond metaphysical order, metaphysics carries it back by way of interpretation. As such, metaphor is, as Heidegger says, "bogged down in metaphysics."

The metaphysical interpretation of metaphor as described by Heidegger is made on the horizon of sign-words. As in George's or Hölderline's metaphor, some words are taken out of their linguistic and relational context of signification, and become hint-words in order to travel into their original relation with things named by them,

which dwell in nearness to one another in time-space.<sup>50</sup> Without freeing away from the system of language, words cannot initiate such a wondering journey. All genuine poems thus invite us into that journey. However, if poems are perceived within metaphysics, their hint-words, guiding us into the original region of the forefold, are turned back into sign-words again, so that the journey, though initiated once, aborts. All words fall back upon the system of linguistic relations, and lose their original relation to things. As such, Heidegger warns us against a metaphysical interpretation of metaphors, since it blocks our openness toward the fourfold, and the mysterious relation of things and words. Heidegger's warning against metaphysics is also a warning against taking metaphor as a rhetorical figure. If metaphor is taken as such, it necessarily implies an interpretation to unveil it to find its proper meaning. However, metaphor, being much more than a rhetorical figure, is hint-words, which initiate our journey into the fourfold--which of course does not mean that all hint-words are metaphors.

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<sup>50</sup> The distinction between sign-words and hint-words cannot be reduced to that of denotation and connotation. Within the context of Heidegger's delineation of words as hints, hint-words, I think, encompass both denotation and connotation which is the extension of the former.

Heidegger's reading of poems such as George's or Hölderlin's can be taken as examples of his reading of metaphor.. If a metaphysical interpretation of metaphor reduces its meaning into a logical statement, Heidegger resists such a temptation, and takes the whole poem as hint-words, which guide him into a thinking poetic journey into the unknown. As such, he always warns himself against the possibility of undoing poems by interpretations. In a poem as well as in metaphor, meaning is not present, so that a reading or interpretation is a waiting journey into its meaning. Therefore, the meanings of metaphor and poetry cannot be found within the system of language. The latter is rather a springboard that throws the former into a journey into the language's original relation with things. This act of launching is based on the fact that language is a system of signification and relation, without which language is not language. Thus, Heidegger's reading of poetry always starts with checking the dictionary meanings of sign-words, and only later leaves them for more original meanings. As we cannot think of hint-words without sign-words being presupposed, we cannot think of the metaphorical without the presupposition of the literal. The literal is, therefore, not the Other of the metaphorical. In a similar way that common language is the worn-out poem, the literal is used-up metaphors. However,



this does not mean that the metaphorical is more primordial than the literal; on the contrary, they coexist.<sup>51</sup> If the literal is taken as worn-out metaphor, the former is the oblivion of metaphor's more radical possibilities. And if they have to coexist despite their differentiation, it is because language always withdraws with the moment of unconcealment. The literal is the unconcealment of language, while the metaphorical is its withdrawing. In terms of Heidegger's bipartite distinction of the being of works of art in "The Origin of the Work of Art," the literal is the world and the metaphorical is the earth.<sup>52</sup> Here the unconcealment of language is an invitation into its withdrawing, as the literal is the invitation into the metaphorical. To put it in terms of Being and Time, if the literal is the Dasein's fallen mode of being and idle talk,

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<sup>51</sup> My discussion of the literal as the forgetting of the metaphorical is not to be confused with a metaphorical etymologism as Nietzsche's coin metaphor implies. What I wish to prove is that the literal is not the residue of the metaphorical which undergoes a historical decay; metaphor does not historically precede the literal. It seems that a naive etymologism easily falls into a romantic conception of pristine language, as well represented in Ralph Waldo Emerson's essay "The Poet": "The etymologist finds the deadest word to have been once a brilliant picture. Language is fossil poetry...language is made up of images,..., which have long ceased to remind us of their poetic origin. But the poet names the thing because he sees it ...." See Emerson's Essays, 275-76.

<sup>52</sup> Gerald Bruns explains such an earth and world dimension of art in terms of Orphic and Hermetic character. See Heidegger's Estrangements, 35-42.

the metaphorical may be its ecstatic possibility of death; metaphor swings between idle talk and silence. Heidegger's reading of poems therefore always lead us into this radical possibility of impossibility, into the unknown region of the fourfold.

If the metaphorical is constantly in danger of falling into silence and nothing, it is because it destroys the established order within metaphysics. If the literal is moving within the metaphysical order, the metaphorical by such a destruction constitutes a returning to the essence of metaphysics and of the literal. The movement of the way for Heidegger lies in leaving only in order to return to where one is already. Heidegger's reading of poems and metaphor shows such a dual moments of way-making movement and backtracking thinking. If metaphor suspends the pre-existing order of language, it goes toward a more fundamental possibility of language, which is the Stillness and silence. While the literal is bound to the present totality of signification, the metaphorical as hint-words disentangle themselves from totality and moves toward its nullification in order to find its real essence. Therefore, the being of metaphor as hint-words is centered on Heideggerian ecstatic temporality. Seen from that context, the present (the sign-words) serves only as a point of departure for the future and the having-been (the

hint-words initiating the backtracking movement). The present functions as an invitation to the future and the having-been, and for it to be valid it has to be filled by what is other than itself. In the likewise manner, the literal as sign-words are conceived as the form to contain the metaphorical as hint-words. As the metaphysical spatiality was overcome by the guide of hint-words and metaphor in our foregoing analysis of the non-metaphysical space, the presence-centered metaphysics now is replaced by the ecstatic unity of temporality with its priority of the future and the having-been.

From the perspective of the non-metaphysical spatiality and temporality as rendered by Heidegger, the relation of the metaphorical and the literal is also to be considered. If language is both unconcealment and concealment in that Heideggerian time-space, language is both literal and metaphorical. Wherever there is language, literal and metaphorical take place simultaneously--which is the truth of language. Therefore, if they are separated from one another, it results in thwarting the happening of truth; being separated into the opposite poles of the literal (language as a relational system) and the metaphorical (language as a non-system), language is either all unconcealment or all concealment. Metaphysics for Heidegger is such a violent separation of

the co-happening of concealment and unconcealment of truth of Being, which in turn results in the separation of the literal and the metaphorical. Within metaphysics, the mysterious unity or neighborhood between them is totally forgotten, and the metaphorical is subjugated into the literal. Language as such is understood and interpreted in terms of the literal and logical language paradigm, with the consequence that language is brought too near to man so that its withdrawing nature falls into oblivion. Metaphysics is one particular misdirected interpretation of the inseparable unity of the literal and the metaphorical.

If metaphysics gives order and hierarchy between the literal and the metaphorical, it then follows that the former is a particular historical destination of the latter. When they are interpreted metaphysically, one of them appears to be subjugated to the other so that the former becomes ancillary. However, that order is assigned by metaphysics, and their original non-metaphysical relation can be found in the notion of Heideggerian difference, as Heidegger discusses in his essay "Language." In order to account for the nature of the inseparable unity between world and thing or (between literal and metaphorical), Heidegger uses a Greek term, diaphora: "The intimacy of the difference is the unifying element of the diaphora, the carrying out that carries through...The dif-

ference carries out world in its wordling, carries out things in their thinging. Thus carrying them out, it carries them toward one another" (OW, p. 202).<sup>53</sup> This diaphora is a unifying word of the metaphorical concealment and the literal unconcealment.<sup>54</sup> While it gives rise to their differentiation, it also unifies them in their intimacy. Whereever there is language, there always happens the difference between the metaphorical and the literal.

In this respect, the traditional order between metaphysics and metaphor, as well summarized by Heidegger's brief remark that metaphor is contained within metaphysics, can be reversed. This is to say, metaphysics, as one particular system of language, is one historical

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<sup>53</sup> In the same text Heidegger defines dif-ference also in terms of Ereignis, dimension, and pain [Schmerz] or Riss. Though they are important in understanding Heidegger's thinking of language, I avoided their discussion here lest this chapter be too complex. However, it should be observed that by multiplying terms for dif-ference, he implies that there is no proper language for dif-ference as there is no proper word for Being. Dif-ference along with other terms describing them are guiding hint-words.

<sup>54</sup> I agree with Andras Sandor's analysis of the relation between metaphor and diaphora. In his essay "Metaphor or Diaphor," Sandor makes the following observation: "Language is neither literal nor metaphoric; it is diaphoric. Only speech can establish literals and metaphors, or rather only people can establish them in discourse." And he goes on to say that "Strictly speaking there is no meaning prior to the division into literal and figurative" (119, 120).

destination of the original difference between the literal and the metaphorical. While metaphor is a crossing and going-beyond movement, it takes a special form and direction in metaphysics (crossing over the physics in Greek). This metaphysical determination of metaphor, though it has its root in metaphora, goes back to its origin and interprets the latter in its own terms, thus the temporal order of before and after being destroyed. As such, the multidirectional going-beyond and crossing movement of metaphor is confined in a synecdochical way within the crossing movement between the sensuous and the non-sensuous; the whole is interpreted in terms of a part and not the other way around. Because of this synecdochical representation of the difference between the literal and the metaphorical by metaphysics, the nature of the difference itself has never been seriously questioned in the history of Western thinking. The essence of metaphor, it can be said, has been seen from the wrong end of a telescope.<sup>55</sup> Though metaphysics is less original than

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<sup>55</sup> This metaphor of a telescope has a theological implication, which is, I think, true of Heidegger's writings. One end of the telescope is the region of divinity, while the other that of humanity. As seen in his "Letter on Humanism," Heidegger is not humanistic in its traditional sense. If man has been seen from the perspective of humanity, he proposes to consider man from the opposite perspective, that is, of Being or of God (in terms of theology). Such a reversal is also his notion of backtracking thinking, which he applies to metaphysics. Backtracking goes to the origin of metaphysics, and sees

metaphor, the former has been taken as more original than the latter, and instead of the former being interpreted in terms of the latter, the contrary interpretation has dominated the history of metaphor and metaphysics. Such a history has determined also the relation between philosophy and literature. What Heidegger proposes in his overcoming metaphysics is, therefore, to destruct this metaphysical order and to think and interpret metaphysics in terms of poetry and metaphor.

# V

Now before closing this chapter, I will briefly summarize it by mapping out the itinerary of metaphor as implied by Heidegger's writings on poetry. Fundamentally, this itinerary is the movement of the hermeneutical circle and way [Weg], that is, to return to where one is already. In his essay on Hölderlin "Remembrance of the Poet," Heidegger explains it in terms of leaving home and returning home, the dual movements which constitute and give rise to the being of poetry. Heidegger's other essay on Trakl's poetic work, entitled "Language in the Poem," discusses the same circular movement in a way that suits

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the metaphysical destination of Being from the perspective of the origin.

our purpose better, though he does not mention metaphor explicitly.

Heidegger begins "Language in the Poem" with one line of Trakl's poems "Something strange is the soul on the earth," and inquires into the meaning of the soul's journey. What is implied in that line is the enigmatic relation of the soul to the earth: the soul no doubt belongs to the earth, but in a way that does not belong to it.<sup>56</sup> Though the soul is within the earth, the former is a stranger to the latter. As such, the earth, though contains the soul in itself, cannot define or determine the nature of the soul. Such a strange relation of the soul to the earth is due to the fact that the earth has been disintegrating and decomposing, thus moving far away from its original nature. One example of the earth's disintegration is human kind: "the curse of the decomposing kind is that the old human kinship has been struck apart by discord among sexes, tribes and races" (OW, p. 170). Though the human kind was held in unity in the origin, they now are born differentiated and determined sexually, racially, and linguistically so that their unity is forgotten. Therefore, the soul remains as a stranger to

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<sup>56</sup> This is another expression of the Heidegger's conception of Dasein's authentic being in the world as uncanniness [Unheimlichkeit] in Being and Time.



that historical tendency of differentiation, and instead aims at the original unity of the human kind.

Those who follow the path of the soul, strangers, therefore, have to part from loved ones who belong to the earth too inseparably, and then have to "loosen [their] bonds and slowly slip away" (OW, p. 171). As Heidegger explains by Trakl's poem, the wondering stranger is "he who is apart" (OW, p. 172). Being separated and freed away from the earth, the stranger can move into the earliness before the earth's decomposition, and can unfold true undifferentiated nature of human beings, with a vision of another beginning. According to Heidegger, such an act of backtracking and a vision of another beginning constitutes the very being of Trakl's poetic work:

It speaks by answering to that journey upon which the stranger is leading on ahead. The path he has taken leads away from the old degenerate generation. It escorts him to go under in the earliness of the unborn generation that is kept in store. The language of the poetry whose site is in apartness [Abgeschiedenheit] answers to the home-coming of unborn mankind into the quite beginning of its stiller nature (OW, p. 191).

In the context of Heidegger's essay "Language in the Poem," the soul is metaphor, whereas the earth is the literal language.<sup>57</sup> Metaphor is related to the literal in a

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<sup>57</sup> If translated in terms of "Origin of the Work of Art," the soul in "Language in the Poem" means "earth," and the earth means "world."

strange way so that the former is both within and without the latter. Metaphor is therefore a stranger to the literal, and sets itself apart from the latter in order to free and separate away from the latter.<sup>58</sup> However, this separation does not mean an absolute turning away from the literal, since the separation is made only in order to return to the essence of the latter. If it were not for such an separation, metaphor would not move into the essence of the literal. The necessity of going back to the beginning essence is because of the historical and metaphysical destination of the literal; in a similar way that man is broken into sexes, tribes and races, the literal have been differentiated, systematized, and categorized too much and loses its original relation with things named by them and the neighborhood of things where words move.

The consequence of such a categorical differentiation is that the unity of the forefold as well as the unity of human kind are forgotten. Being differentiated away, the literal forgets that which gives rise to that differentiation and that which is differentiating.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> In his The Origin of the Work of Art, Heidegger in the same way speaks of such a severing of the work of art from humanity (PL, p. 66).

<sup>59</sup> This again is the forgetting of dif-ference in the literal language, that is, its being different from itself. As William Richardson explains, "dif-ference says

Therefore, within the literal, a man is either American or German, either male or female, either black or white. In that differentiating system of language, what is really to be thought, man as a whole or as a unity, is not thought any more. Due to that tendency toward differentiation, it is considered to be wrong to say that the American are the German, the male are the female, or the black are the white. Being separated into sexes, races and tribes, only the separated consequence dominates language and thinking so that any saying or thinking to the contrary is considered to be false.

However, in opposition to that literal tendency, metaphor, as stranger to the literal, goes back to the origin of the literal and brings back original message to the literal for the sake of another beginning of it. When that original message is brought, it speaks in a way that the literal judges as false. What is judged to be false by the literal is what constitutes the original message: the American are the German, the male are the female, and the white are the black. In judging these sayings false, the literal as given in the system of language are unable to see that they have their own validity, if seen from the

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differentiation, which implies both differentiating and differentiated ... [both] the moment of differentiating and the moment when the differentiated issue forth as such (*italic in the original*).” See Richardson, Heidegger, 579.

context of the original neighborhood of mankind. Of course, it does not mean that the origin can be expressed in terms of metaphor: metaphor is on the way toward the origin, but is never to be identified with the origin, which remains unsayable. As such, the tendency of metaphor, quite against that of the literal, is toward the death of language or Stillness [Stille]. By going back to that unsayable origin and then by returning to the literal, metaphor prepares another beginning of the literal. Metaphor is something strange to the literal, since the former can gain the latter only by its wondering in apart from the latter. Because of this strangeness of metaphor, Heidegger speaks of poetic images as "visible inclusion of the alien in the sight of the familiar."<sup>60</sup> In later works, especially in his book Gelassenheit, Heidegger discusses such a metaphorical wondering journey into the alien in terms of Galassenheit (letting-be), that is, to let oneself be appropriated by the claim of metaphor to initiate a journey into the unknown relation with things in time-space.<sup>61</sup> As Heidegger says already in What is Called

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<sup>60</sup> And Heidegger continues to say that "The poetic saying of images gathers the brightness and sound of the heavenly appearances into one with the darkness and silence of what is alien. By such sights the god surprises us" (PL, p. 226).

<sup>61</sup> Gelassenheit has been translated into English under the title Discourse on Thinking, by John Anderson and Hans Freund.

Thinking, man is a sign-word, which already inclines toward hint-words, and thus being on the way toward the unknown. As man in speaking draws toward what withdraws (metaphor), he thus follows the traces of withdrawing Being.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Derrida and Differance

#### Metaphor and Metaphysics

Desiring the exhilarations of changes:  
The motive for metaphor, shrinking from  
The weight of primary noon,  
The A B C of being,  
(Wallace Stevens, "The Motive for Metaphor")

With the careful and reserved opening hypothesis that "it may be that universal history is the history of a handful of metaphors," in his short essay "The Fearful Sphere of Pascal," Jorge Borges proposes to trace this history, the history of metaphors of Being, God, or Nature.<sup>1</sup> Among the handful of metaphors Borges examines, that have determined universal history, or to put it in a Heideggerian term, the history of Western metaphysics, is the history of the "sphere" metaphor. Since the sphere is "the most perfect and most uniform figure," as Borges demonstrates it becomes a metaphor par excellence to represent Being, God, or Nature. At issue here is not the meaning of this metaphor, but its force or value which, since its emergence six centuries before Christ or even before, has bound all descendent thinkers to itself as if it were the very divinity itself to attract speculative thinking to its own

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<sup>1</sup> Labyrinths, 189.

center. From Parmenides and Plato, through Dante and Giordano Bruno, to Pascal, these thinkers could not but think of God and Nature with this spatial metaphor, while refining and elaborating it. In tracing this curious repetition of the same metaphor in the history of Western thinking, Borges thus has to conclude his essay that "It may be that universal history is the history of the different intonations given to a handful of metaphors."<sup>2</sup>

In his essay on Emmanuel Levinas Jacques Derrida quotes Borges' pronouncement on metaphor and universal history, and adds his own exegetic intonation to it by way of questioning: "Who will ever dominate it [metaphor], who will ever pronounce its meaning without first being pronounced by it? What language will ever escape it?"<sup>3</sup> For Derrida, if all thinkers from the nascence of metaphysics and literature have been bound to some central metaphors, it is not because of their intellectual weakness of thinking and reasoning, but because of the very nature of language. The seemingly simple fact that one uses language or thinks with it, it appears, presupposes that one enters into certain metaphoricity and is lost there so

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 192.

<sup>3</sup> Derrida, Writing and Difference, 92, hereinafter cited as WD in the text. The following abbreviations will be used for Derrida's texts: MP for Margins of Philosophy; P for Positions; OG for Of Grammatology; D for Dissemination; RT for "The Retrait of Metaphor."

that he is unable to disengage himself from it insofar as he remains within language or he remains human--if humanity is defined in terms of capacity for language. The series of questions that we would like to ask along with Borges and Derrida are: Why do we have to metaphorize God or Being spatially in order to think about it, and why do we have to employ such specific metaphors like the sphere or the sun, and how much do we know or "dominate" the meaning of metaphor when we speak metaphorically, and finally what is the relation between metaphor and metaphysics?

The questions enumerated above are rhetorical to the extent that they can by no means be answered definitely and we know at the very moment of asking them that any attempt to answer them is destined to be self-defeating to the extent that metaphor cannot be dominated. To speak of metaphor is always circular in that there is no position outside language and therefore a certain degree of metaphoricality is always implicated in language and in the very act of our question. However, this aporia in the discussion of metaphor does not prevent discourse from actually taking place; even in the absence of knowledge of metaphor we always speak and write about metaphor. This can be applied also to Borges' statement about metaphor and universal history. Has there ever been universal history? Does Borges know what he means by metaphor when he talks



about it? Despite the disconcerting fact that metaphor cannot be dominated, it is always dominated fortunately or fortuitously to the extent that it takes place. If the aporia of the discourse is transgressed, there may be a certain economy behind this transgression, which incessantly transforms the aporia into an occasion for discursive proliferation. Every different intonation given to the sphere metaphor in Borges' essay can be said to be an instance that this aporia only contributes to the creation of another discourse. An aporia is already a transgression.

In asking the seemingly unanswerable questions about the relation between metaphor and metaphysics, I want to inquire into how economically the aporia of discourse is transformed into discourse. This question of economy will I elaborate in terms of Derrida's "différance" or "vouloir-dire" which enables us to "say the contrary without contradiction."<sup>4</sup> But the notion of economy will be clarified later only when this chapter is fully under way. As a point of departure, the present chapter will begin with reiterating Heidegger's famous short statement on metaphor: "only within metaphysics is there the

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<sup>4</sup> Derrida says elsewhere: "by the economy of différance, they [supplements] confirm the interdict they transgress, get around a danger, and reserve an expenditure (OG, p. 165)

metaphorical" (from Der Satz vom Grund, published in 1957). As Borges traces the history of the same sphere metaphor with different intonations, I will examine different intonations given first by Derrida and then by Ricoeur to Heidegger's sentence in order to contextualize and properly situate my discussion of the proposed topic.

As with the case of Borges' sentence, the meaning of both metaphysics and the metaphorical in Heidegger's is far from being clear, since it immediately provokes two questions regarding whether there have ever been metaphysics and the metaphorical as to deserve their distinctive and independent names. However, in spite of or thanks to its problematic nature, Heidegger's statement generates a series of different intonations on the relation between metaphor and metaphysics. Among these different intonations, two stand out as especially conspicuous and are related to each other in a way of critical responses. One of them is Derrida's essay "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy," which was originally published in 1971. The other is Ricoeur's examination of both the Heidegger's sentence and Derrida's essay in The Rule of Metaphor (1975), in a chapter "Metaphor and philosophical discourse." Here Ricoeur accuses Derrida of misreading of Heidegger, that is, mistaking "Heidegger's restrained

criticism" for "unbounded 'deconstruction'" (RM, p. 284).<sup>5</sup> Ricoeur's accusation of Derrida motivated the latter to defend himself and clarify his reading of Heidegger by writing another essay, "The Retrait of Metaphor." The different readings of Heidegger by Ricoeur and Derrida are, I think, inevitable and already expected from the very nature of Heidegger's statement. And it seems that any discourse on the relation between metaphor and metaphysics tends to be put into a system of displacement and replacement, without coming to the center of the question. My discussion of Derrida and Ricoeur is therefore not only a discussion of their differing notions on metaphor, but also a discussion of some problems or economy in the very core of their discourse, without which they cannot hope to write and speak.

# I. From Heidegger to Derrida

The difference between  
thinking and poetizing

Heidegger condemns metaphysics as the ontology of presence, because he conceives metaphysics as the oblivion of the

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<sup>5</sup> Hereafter Ricoeur's The Rule of Metaphor will be cited in the text as RM.

difference between presencing and present, between being and becoming. In order to revive this forgotten difference, in his early writings Heidegger has been continuously occupied with the question of ontological difference, the difference between Being and beings. Even though he later abandons the notion of ontological difference, it is only in order to think the difference more profoundly and more originally. His later writings therefore are directed at a radical re-thinking of difference itself, accompanied by his question of the nature of language. If thinking always goes hand in hand with language, Heidegger's persisting question into language and poetry is not surprising, since otherwise the difference cannot be thought at all. More fundamental than ontological difference seems to be the difference between thinking and Being, Being and language, thinking and poetizing, and philosophy and literature. In this regard the question that we will ask along with Heidegger is: What is difference? and another question, which seems to be indistinguishable from the former question or perhaps identical with it, is what is Being?

In his essay "Language" Heidegger attempts to articulate the meaning of difference by using many other identical terms such as diaphora, dimension, Ereignis, Riss, or Stille. This fertile production of diverse terms

on the one hand proves the importance of difference, but on the other it witnesses the difficulty of thinking that notion. Difference for Heidegger is the very locus where Being and beings are brought into words and appearance and where philosophy and literature are differentiated. Thus Heidegger says in "...Poetically Man Dwells":

Poetry and thinking meet each other in one and the same only when, and only as long as, they remain distinctly in the distinctness of their nature. The same never coincides with the equal, not even in the empty indifferent oneness of what is merely identical ... The same ... is the belonging together of what differs, through a gathering by way of the difference. We can only say "the same" if we think difference. It is in the carrying out and settling of differences that the gathering nature of sameness comes to light. The same banishes all zeal always to level what is different into the equal or identical.<sup>6</sup>

Heidegger here repeats his distinction between sameness and identity, elaborated in Identity and Difference, to the effect that difference is irreducible to identity. However, difference does not belong to the order of separation or of a mediating relation created out of the initial separation. The difference between poetry and thinking being undefinable and subtle, they remain different despite or thanks to their oneness. As William Richardson explains, difference may be thought in terms of two moments of "differentiating and differentiated," "the moment of differentiating and the moment when the

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<sup>6</sup> Heidegger, Poetry, Language, Thought, 219.

differentiated issue forth as such."<sup>7</sup> For Heidegger, metaphysics is the fascination with the second movement (present) while forgetting the first movement (presencing), with the consequence that difference between them is not thought any more and that difference is reduced to identity. Being incapable of thinking difference, metaphysics transforms movement into entity, verb into noun, non-concept into concept. At the core of the most challenging task to go beyond or to think more originally of metaphysics is the question of difference, which is another way of asking about the truth of Being.

One of the serious consequences of the forgetting of difference is the separation of philosophy from poetry, the event which might coincide with the commencement of metaphysics. According to Heidegger, even though poetry and philosophy are inseparable and are held in unity in their difference, metaphysics as the oblivion of their subtle relation produced a deep chasm between them and ended up with separating words from beings. As the result of that separation, the question of Being becomes the proper realm of philosophy, while poetry concerns itself

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<sup>7</sup> Richardson, Heidegger, 579. And he goes on to explain: "The differentiating must be conceived as unity, as one-ness, and the differentiated as necessarily two, or as the author will say later, as two-ness. The whole process of difference consists in this tension, this muted adhesion between unity and duality which is the scission as such."

merely with words: merely because philosophy, itself being extralinguistic, can dispense with language, thus poetry being reduced into the matter of rhetoric or expression. Therefore, the transformation of difference into separation brings about another consequence of hierarchical evaluation, that is, the simultaneous overvaluation of philosophy and devaluation of literature.

Heidegger's calling attention to the difference between literature and philosophy can be understood as an attempt to save the former from its subordination to the latter and to restore them to their original relation. This attempt is a serious challenge to the traditional autonomy of speculative philosophy, which grounds itself upon the non-linguistic transcendental realm of the thinking and knowing mind: the mind is supposed to depend on nothing but itself, with its own intrinsic principles and rules not vulnerable to language. Heidegger's destruction of the autonomy of philosophy, however, is not to be confused with a total destruction of the difference between philosophy and literature--which may be a rebellion against the history of metaphysics. As seen in the above quoted passage from "...Poetically Man Dwells...", nothing can be farther from Heidegger's intention to undo the difference between them, for it will do violence to both. In questioning the difference between literature and

philosophy, Heidegger thinks of them in terms of Being, which holds them in unity despite their genetic difference and prevents their metaphysical separation by functioning as a center: "Thinking attends to the lighting of Being in that it puts its saying of Being into language as the home of eksistence."<sup>8</sup> What Heidegger has in mind is the happy union between literature and philosophy, and saying and thinking, in the sense that they are ultimately united by Being.

If Heidegger's happy union between philosophy and literature is taken into consideration, his condemnation of metaphor as belonging to metaphysics is, as I have discussed in the last chapter, not a real condemnation but a warning against and an indication of a constant danger existing on the part of philosophy to dominate literature. There is always a certain danger of violating their union and subordinating one to the other--the actualization of which is the history of Western metaphysics as the forgetting of the difference between presencing and present. Metaphor at the core of literature can turn upon itself in order to destroy its proper domain, literature itself. While metaphor belongs to literature, it can be transported into another country, philosophy, only in order to be seduced by the latter and to become a spy with a

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<sup>8</sup> Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," 239.



mission to betray the former. Metaphor is located in the dangerous border between philosophy and literature.

Another danger of metaphor may be its migration as a spy to the kingdom of philosophy in order to subvert, plague, and metaphorize the whole kingdom of philosophy.

From the moment that we put into question the Heideggerian happy union of difference and bracket off Being as a center, we begin to enter into Derrida's "system beyond Being."<sup>9</sup> My explication of Heidegger's critique of metaphor has been made in order to see how radically Derrida transforms Heideggerian questions, which Derrida reiterates, such as the notion of difference and the relation between literature and philosophy. Derrida asks these same questions from a different context and gives different intonations to them. In following some threads of thought common to both Heidegger and Derrida, I do not hope that I can develop Heidegger's thoughts into a more advanced form, the very possibility of which would falsely presuppose that Derrida's philosophy is an attempt to

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<sup>9</sup> In characterizing Derrida's philosophy (if we can call it so), Gasché names it "A System beyond Being," which is also a title of chapter 9 of his The Tain of the Mirror. As for the discussion of the movement from Heidegger to Derrida, see Gasché's essay "Joining the Text: From Heidegger to Derrida." While dealing with Derrida's translation of Heidegger's term "Entzug" as "retrait" in his "The Retrait of Metaphor," Gasché inquires how Derrida replaces Heidegger's question of Being with that of text, thereby undermining and risking the very word of Being.

refine or develop his master's. If Derrida can render some help in asking these questions again, it is by way of resituating them in a context other than Being; his questions are not ontological, but, we might say, grammatological.

To think of difference without the regulating and harmonizing center of Being and to conceive of Being as text is Derrida's transformation of Heidegger's fundamental ontology into generalized or general writing.<sup>10</sup> Though not rejecting the Heideggerian question of difference in terms of the truth of Being, Derrida carefully suggests that "perhaps difference is older than Being itself," if "Being, according to the Greek forgetting [of difference]...has never meant anything except beings" (MP, p. 67). Difference may be more primordial than Being so that the former is devoid of a center to hold difference in unity. Here Derrida, rather than asserting the primordially of difference over Being, is attempting to read the implication of the question of Being, which cannot even be thought without difference. As Derrida continues to say, what is to be thought is to ask:

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<sup>10</sup> "The disappearance of that face [noesis, or Being] is the movement of difference which violently opens writing, or, if one prefers, which opens itself to writing and which writing opens for itself...the disappearance...is thus the precondition of discourse, taken this time as a moment and not as a principle of generalized writing" (*italic in the original*) (D, pp. 167-68).

There may be a difference still more unthought than the difference between Being and beings. We certainly can go further toward naming it in our language. Beyond Being and beings, this difference, ceaselessly differing from and deferring (itself), would trace (itself) (by itself)--this différance would be the first and last trace if one still could speak, here, of origin and end (MP, p. 67).

According to Derrida, the Heideggerian question of Being depends on difference for its possibility, and Being then is rather the effect of this difference. Unlike Heidegger's difference, difference remains as difference without unity, "ceaselessly differing from and deferring (itself)." Thus distinguishing his difference from Heidegger's difference, Derrida underscores the structural impossibility of reducing difference into oneness. For Derrida, Heidegger's difference tends to be metaphysical in spite of the latter's attempt to avoid it.<sup>11</sup> Derrida's notion of difference thus can be measured against the metaphysical inclination of Heideggerian difference toward Hegelian Aufhebung which lifts difference into "the self-presence of an onto-theological or onto-teleological synthesis" (P, p. 44).

Insofar as Derrida's difference is the deconstruction of the self-presence, it poses a fundamental question to the meaning of the Heideggerian question of Being and

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<sup>11</sup> See Gasché, The Tain of the Mirror, 194-205, esp. 203, and Derrida's Positions, 9-10.

difference. What does it mean and signify to ask about Being and difference, if they cannot be thought as themselves, and what if there is no truth of Being? Even though Heidegger conceives thinking of Being as abysmal and without any safe ground, he never doubts that such an abysmal thinking is to follow the trace of Being and is therefore still within the neighborhood of Being. Thus thinking for Heidegger is always thinking of Being, even granted that Being never comes to light. To the degree that thinking is to follow the trace of disappearing Being, it knows what it thinks, even though it can never hope to thematize and render it logically. If Derrida "attempt[s] to locate in Heidegger's text...the signs of a belonging to metaphysics," he seems to have in mind such a desire toward the truth of Being, Heidegger's nostalgia for pre-Socratic philosophy and another beginning. In discourse as well as in thinking and speaking, presence for Derrida is immediacy of meaning, "the myth of consciousness," that is, the speaker knowing exactly what he speaks as self-presence (OG, p. 166). If one wants to avoid idle talk, one has to know the content of what he is speaking and writing. To go back to Heidegger's thinking of Being and difference, Heidegger is supposed to know the meaning of his thinking, and the question arising here is how it is possible to

think and know Being and difference if they cannot even be thought, since they are not beings.

For Heidegger, the essence of language, which is never linguistic, is to enter into experience with it while listening to its "ring of stillness."<sup>12</sup> Only when we change our relation to language and learn to be attentive to its silent call to Being, the inadequacy of language as a system of signs is overcome and beings are brought into words. But again what we have to ask along with Derrida is: what if language as a system of signs is not supported by the silent center of Being, and if beings are not brought to words and to appearance any more? What if thinking of Being is only play of words without a center to suspend their endless play? For instance, let's consider Heidegger's diverse definitions of difference in his essay "Language." The question is that of the difficulty of thinking of difference, which becomes more serious and more grave because it is not difference as signified lexically. Lacking a proper word for difference in language, Heidegger has to supplement it with many other terms, such as diaphora, intimacy in the separation, dimension, Ereignis, or Riss. Since none of them does justice to what is to be thought, one term is replaced by another, which is then replaced by another, and so on, as if these totality of

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<sup>12</sup> Heidegger, Poetry, Language, Thought, 207.

supplements and replacements finally succeed in presenting difference from diverse angles. As I have discussed in the last chapter, language for Heidegger does not name Being; it only indicates and hints at Being. Language in Heideggerian semantics does not mean what it says, with the imperative that its meaning has to be supplemented by the truth of Being. In Heideggerian ontology the chain of supplements and replacements is suspended and is given its meaning from Being. But Derrida gives an ironical turn to Heidegger's ontology and finds in the latter's diverse terms for difference only difference. The chain of supplements is neither to be totalized, nor to be dominated, since language does not have a center.

If totalization no longer has any meaning, it is not because the infiniteness of a field cannot be covered by a finite glance or a finite discourse, but because the nature of the field--that is, language and a finite language--excludes totalization. This field is in effect that of play, that is to say, a field of infinite substitutions only because it is finite, that is to say, because instead of being too large, there is something missing from it: a center which arrests and grounds the play of substitutions (WD, p. 289).

The truth and falsity of discourse is replaced by Derrida by the play or effect of language. Not being supported by a center of Being, discourse becomes the play of substitutions; without knowing what it says, it is forced to dominate its field by the multiplied substitutions and to postpone the impossible emergence of meaning by such

repetitive substitutions. If there is play instead of truth, what then happens to Heidegger's thinking of Being and difference?

## II. Metaphor

If because of the very structure of language meaning cannot be present with saying, the problem of metaphor appears to be intrinsic to language. In the system of differance the meaning of discourse is continuously deferred and differed and metaphor is always present. Metaphor as such becomes a persisting concern with Derrida. However, Derrida's interest with metaphor is not simply because of its negativity, but because of its positive role in discourse, as his many essays indicate. If metaphor is intrinsic to language, it is also an unavoidable necessity in discourse. As Derrida's reading of Heidegger reveals, how can Being be thought without ontic metaphors, since Being is nothing outside beings? Without having anything to provide concrete material for thinking, to question Being is abysmal and verges almost on nonsense, and the questioner is threatened by the possibility of losing his subjectivity, not knowing what he is thinking about.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> See Levinas, Totality and Infinity, 142-43.

From this abysmal thinking of nothing to think, one is saved by metaphor to think something. Since Being is nothing outside ontic beings, Derrida maintains that "it is impossible to avoid the ontic metaphor in order to articulate Being in language, in order to let Being circulate in language" (WD, p. 136). Being, maybe the most fundamental concept in the history of Western philosophy, can be thought only metaphorically. If that is the case, metaphor is the very condition and possibility of ontology and metaphysics. Metaphor names a gap between saying and meaning and threatens the ideal of presence as the disruption of presence. However, in spite of its seeming intervention into the transparency of discourse, metaphor also comes to the aid of discourse for its realization wherever presence is lost or impossible. Metaphor then has a strange relation to philosophy, designating both the impossibility and the possibility of philosophy.

This strange relation between metaphor and philosophy is what Derrida is concerned with in his essays on metaphor, such as "White Mythology" and "The Retreat of Metaphor." Nevertheless, we cannot hope to expect from Derrida any answer to that strange relation.<sup>14</sup> As Gasché

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<sup>14</sup> John Llewelyn comments on Derrida's question of metaphor: "What is a metaphor? By now we have learned not to expect from Derrida ... an answer to such questions which catalogues sufficient and necessary conditions." See his Derrida on the Threshold of Sense, 76.



rightly points out, these essays are not attempts to develop some coherent theses or concepts about metaphor, but questioning inquiries of the difference between metaphor and concept.<sup>15</sup> If we want to inquire further into this strange relation, we, therefore, have to read some implications Derrida's writings involve and develop some hints his writings suggest. In developing Derridian perspective on metaphor, I will examine his distinction between vouloir-dire (commonly translated as "meaning") and dire (saying), the distinction which he makes in Of Grammatology and Speech and Phenomena and keeps on employing in other essays. The importance of that distinction in my discussion of metaphor will be immediately perceptible, since metaphor is basically the problem of the difference between saying and meaning. The importance of that distinction will increase since through that distinction Derrida, as I hope to demonstrate, defines the meaning of metaphysics.

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<sup>15</sup> Gasché, The Tain of the Mirror, 307. Richard Rorty characterizes Derrida's philosophical writings in general by saying that "Derrida, then, has little to tell us about language, but a great deal to tell us about philosophy." See his essay "Philosophy as a Kind of Writing," 144. Concerning Derrida's attitude toward the problem of metaphor, see also E. T. Gendlin, "Monological Moves and Nature Metaphors." Here Gendlin concludes that Derrida denies-and-still-retains the old concept of metaphor, now contradicting itself" (390).

Derrida's complicated reading of Rousseau's work in Of Grammatology evolves around some contradictions within the latter's discourse through the analysis of which Derrida explicates his notion of the logic of supplement as opposed to the traditional logic of identity. As Derrida's reading brings to light, Rousseau's text unfolds itself within the system of metaphysical valorization of presence against absence, nature against culture, origin against supplement, speech against writing, and so on. For Rousseau, the second terms of opposition are dangerous to the first terms since the former can undermine and corrupt the latter and thus the natural hierarchy between them can be totally destroyed. In order to preserve the natural hierarchy, it is vital and imperative that the second terms are to remain only as supplements to the first and to be limited within their non-essential redundant territory. Derrida's careful reading of Rousseau's text, however, reveals that the first original terms can be affirmed only by simultaneously affirming the secondary terms--which the logic of identity does not permit. Derrida goes on to explain how the two contradictory possibilities are attained:

What are the two contradictory possibilities that Rousseau wishes to retain simultaneously? And how does he do it? He wishes on the one hand to affirm, by giving it a positive value, everything of which articulation is the principle or everything with which it constructs a system (passion, language, society, man, etc). But he intends to affirm simultaneously all that is canceled by articulation

(accent, life, energy, passion yet again, and so on)  
(OG, pp. 245-46).

Such a simultaneous affirmation of the two is what Rousseau wishes to say. Since that contradictory unity is not permitted by the logic of identity, the unity is realized by desire: as in the dream, desire can satisfy incompatibles and contradictions, as Derrida explains by referring to Freud's analysis of the dream.<sup>16</sup> However, Rousseau, since he is caught within the logic of identity, happens to "say what he does not wish to say, describes what he does not wish to conclude: that the positive (is) the negative, life (is) death, presence (is) absence ..." (OG, p. 246). In the daylight of logic the dream of desire is suddenly dissipated and violated. At the moment of awakening Rousseau has to acknowledge the impossibility of the dream.

The conflict between wishing-to-say and saying in Rousseau is also the conflict between desire and language or discourse. According to Derrida's reading, Rousseau wishes to say the contrary of what his saying functions in discourse. What Rousseau wants to say is pure and full presence and nature where supplements are "nothing because [they] are added to a full presence to which [they] are exterior" (OG, p. 167). But his desire to say pure

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<sup>16</sup> OG, p. 245

presence is invalidated by the discursive reality of his saying. Contrary to his desire for pure origin and presence, his saying as discourse reveals that there is only "an originary differance that is neither absence nor presence, neither negative nor positive" (OG, p. 167). Because of this discursive implication or of the logic of supplements, Derrida keeps on asking "What does Rousseau say without saying, see without seeing?" (OG, p. 215). Rousseau, it seems, does not want to confront the consequence of his desire's discourse, since otherwise the latter would be undone as soon as it is constituted. Or as de Man contends in his reading of the same work, Rousseau knows that his desire is not literally true and his knowledge thus "makes it unavoidable that the texts should be written in the form of a fictionally diachronic narrative, or, if one prefers to call it so, of an allegory."<sup>17</sup> Whatever the case may be, there lies an undeniable conflict between intention and meaning, desire and meaning, and speech and meaning. Thus with Derrida it is essential to ask "(what is) meaning to say" (P, p. 14).

Why does one intend and desire to say the opposite of what his saying signifies? Why does Rousseau wish to grasp and present the impossible presence even at the risk of

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<sup>17</sup> De Man, Blindness and Insight, 135.

consistency of his discourse? What is the source and origin of this impossible desire for presence? While demonstrating the contradictions within Rousseau's texts, Derrida maintains that such contradictions are not only one particular case of Rousseau, but universal cases common to philosophers; and he goes on to propose that "we must locate all the signs of its [Rousseau's text] to the metaphysics of presence, from Plato to Hegel, rhythmmed by the articulation of presence upon self-presence" (OG, p. 246). According to Derrida, Rousseau's wish to say something impossible to say has been constituted by the history of the Western metaphysics of presence. From such metaphysics of presence one cannot hope to escape, since language itself is metaphysical. As Derrida explains, even everyday language "carries with it not only a considerable number of presuppositions of all types, but also presuppositions inseparable from metaphysics" (P, p. 19). As a strange mixture of presuppositions both metaphysical and non-metaphysical, language encourages us to aspire for presence, but without allowing it to be realized. The presuppositions of all types within language thus cannot be dominated or determined by one single metaphysical presupposition. Language as the system of difference does

not allow any metaphysical totalization.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, even though one's desire for presence is born out of language and its metaphysical system of presuppositions, desire cannot dominate them and has to remain only as an impossible desire. Metaphysics for Derrida is this impossible desire for presence, "the desire for living speech" (OG, pp. 56-57), and "the myth of consciousness" (OG, p. 166). If it is applied to speech and meaning, this metaphysical desire is the desire for the transparency of meaning in saying, an unequivocality without shadow, a "univocal and in principle universally translatable discourse":<sup>19</sup>

When I speak, not only am I conscious of being present of what I think, but I am conscious also of keeping as close as possible to my thought, or to the "concept," ... that seems to depend upon my pure and free spontaneity, requiring the use of no instrument, no accessory, no force taken from the world (P, p. 22).

In the ideal situation of speaking language, as Derrida continues to say, is supposed to "erase itself or to become transparent, in order to allow the concept to present

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<sup>18</sup> Derrida says: "languages are diacritical realities; each element within them is in itself less important than the gap that distinguishes it from other elements... the sum is impossible to totalize but yet it is not exceeded by the infinite richness of a content of meaning or intention" (D, p. 251).

<sup>19</sup> "The Original Discussion of Différance" in Derrida and Différance, 88.

itself as what it is, referring to nothing other than its presence." If language functions by the system of difference, the desire for presence is to suppress its differential play and to liberate intentionality from its fetters. If desire is born out of language, at the very moment of its birth it wants to forget and erase this memory so that desire can be preserved and affirmed without being checked and prohibited by this ignominious birth.

Being constituted by its exclusion of the other and the play of difference in language, the wish-to-say is the ideal language of philosophy, which is supposed to know exactly what it says. However, since the supposed outside and other have been always and already within the inside, the desire to say is undermined and undone by what it says. In his essay on Husserl "La forme et le vouloir-dire," Derrida is more thematically concerned with the relation between wish-to-say and meaning, which he reformulates as the problem of interiority and exteriority. The question that Derrida wants to ask in this essay is about "the status of language in [Husserl's] *Ideas*,"<sup>20</sup> especially

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<sup>20</sup> As early as in 1892, Gottlob Frege posed such a Derridian question regarding the status of language. Frege dealt with such a problem in terms of "an awkwardness of language" as in the following: "As regards the sentence 'this rose is red': The grammatical predicate 'is red' belongs to the subject 'this rose.' Here the words 'The grammatical predicate "is red"' are not a grammatical predicate but a subject. By the very act of explicitly calling it predicate, we deprive it of this property." See

regarding the latter's determination of "the living present as the ultimate, universal, absolute form of transcendental experience in general" (MP, p. 158). The form is conceived by Husserl as the self-transparent meaning or the content of pure intention which is independent of language and thus is never affected by discourse. If the content of meaning is absolutely independent of language, it then follows that language is either mere redundancy or mere decoration. This Husserlian notion of language is based on one of the traditional views of language as expression (*vouloir-dire*).<sup>21</sup>

Discourse will be able only to repeat or to reproduce a content of sense which does not await discourse in order to be what it is. If things are thus, discourse will only transport to the exterior a sense that is constituted before it and without it...Discourse is expressive in its essence, because it consists in transporting to the outside, in exteriorizing a content of interior thought (*italics in original*) (MP, p. 163).

For Husserl, this pure interiority as the form of transcendental experience can be expressed and exteriorized by "the properly logical functioning of discourse" (MP, p.

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Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege, 46n.

<sup>21</sup> For an excellent critique of this expression paradigm of language, see V. N. Volosinov, Marxism and the Philosophy of Language, especially a chapter entitled "Two trends of Thought in Philosophy of Language, 45-63.



160).<sup>22</sup> The telos of language as a means of exteriorizing the given interiority lies in transporting inner logic to the exterior. If language is thus determined as logical, the purpose of philosophical discourse would be to keep itself within the limits of logical language after reducing "the considerable mass of whatever is not purely logical in language to an extrinsic value" (*italic in original*) (MP, p. 160). As already noted in our discussion of Derrida's reading of Rousseau, there is no such pure interiority and pure form of experience independent of languages described by Husserl. However, since Derrida fully addressed that problem in Speech and Phenomenon, his interest in "Form and Meaning" is somewhere else; his concern is with the status of language in philosophical discourse. The question that we want to ask along with Derrida is whether or not Husserl's discourse can satisfy his standard of purely logical and literal language or, to put it another way, whether or not his discourse can avoid illogic and metaphorical language.

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<sup>22</sup> One of the best definition of logical language is made by Philip Wheelwright. "Language that is closed by stipulation--which is to say by definition, combined with a rigid adherence to the law of identity--may be called logical language. It is deliberate steno-language, as opposed to the accidental steno-language that enters into common speech" (38). As for the definition of steno-language, see Metaphor and Reality, 16, 33.

Derrida's question regarding the status of language in Husserl's discourse on logical language and intentionality is one similar to his questioning of Heidegger's language of Being. As for Heidegger, "Being, which is nothing, is not a being, cannot be said, cannot say itself, except in the ontic metaphor" (MP, p. 131). Since literal and logical language is incapable of saying or naming Being, out of its inner necessity Being has to borrow ontic metaphors to give a hint at what it is. In the same manner, despite his attempt to say literally and logically the structure of transcendental experience and expressivity, Husserl ends up with saying that only metaphorically, thus revealing the fundamental gap between what he wants to say and what he actually says. In the absence of logical language to say what he wants to say, Husserl is forced to employ the metaphor of "stratum," though with distrust. His wish to exclude metaphor from his philosophical discourse is thus frustrated by the unavoidable inclusion of the metaphor. As Derrida succinctly puts it, Husserl's "discourse on the logic of the discourse is entangled in a play of metaphors" (MP, p. 160). In spite of this inevitable inclusion of metaphor, Husserl tends to consider metaphor as a mere accident which can be dispensed with as easily as it is employed. However, against Husserl's wish we might be tempted to ask

whether or not thought invites metaphor for its sake since otherwise it has nothing to think. Or to put it another way, how much thinking of Being and intentionality has to depend on metaphor, if we cannot subordinate the latter to a mere function of the former?

As Derrida's analysis brings to light, Rousseau's and Husserl's discourse does not say what they wish to say. Their saying (discourse) always is entangled by the voice of the other which they thematically exclude. But this supposed other turns out to constitute the very core of the self. Thus without ruining the self and its desire, the other, which is found always and already within the self, cannot be radically excluded. Husserl's consciousness's own method for the knowledge of consciousness itself is already a fiction insofar as consciousness is not pure. Without this certain degree of fictionality, discourse cannot come into being; the desire to say exactly what it wants to say is to be mediated and undermined by the other elements alien to the desire. For Husserl, this desire is to say literally and logically. But we have seen how this desire is to undergo a transformation in order to adapt itself to the reality of discourse. No matter whether desire is literal or metaphorical, whose categories we may not apply to desire, it begins to say something other than it wants to say, and curiously only by doing so desire

remains as desire. If desire is neither reality nor need, it remains as desire only if its object is unattainable. Only when desire has its other in itself and thus delaying its fulfillment infinitely, desire survives and asserts itself infinitely. To put it in a Derridian term, desire is difference, differing from itself and deferring itself to be realized. Thus the wish to say and name presence is given into the structure of difference.

If the wish-to-say is structured like difference, it realizes itself in discourse by taking the logic of supplements, not that of identity. In Rousseau, his wishes are caught in contradiction; he wishes to affirm articulation, but he also wishes simultaneously to affirm what is canceled by articulation. In the similar way, he wants to affirm not only presence and life, but absence and death as well. According to the logic of identity, Rousseau's desire is constituted by the two conflicting wishes, thus structurally prohibiting their realization, since to attain one means automatically the loss of the other. However, these contradictory wishes are the contradiction not of full terms, but of terms which are to be supplemented; what is canceled by articulation is to be added in order to complete and to compensate for a lack in articulation. The two seemingly contradictory wishes are rather of a nature of compensation and completion of the

lack of each other, and they find their dwelling place in the space of desire by the logic of supplements. Derrida therefore considers the concept of supplement as an economical one, which "allow[s] us to say the contrary at the same time without contradiction" (OG, p. 179). The relation between presence and absence, nature and culture, and life and death, is not that of contradiction to be finally synthesized, but that of the contrary without synthesis. According to this logic of the supplement, presence is absence, nature is culture, and life is death, to the extent that the first term is in need of the other for its completion.<sup>23</sup> Thus the space of supplement lies in between total absence and total presence, between whose two extreme poles Rousseau's desire is hovering endlessly without reconciliation. Since presence is mediated by absence, Rousseau can desire presence without a fear of its absolute plentitude which might kill him. As such Rousseau secures a certain freedom from or for presence; without committing the risk of being consumed by presence, desire can say and name it. As Derrida puts it, "its [i.e., the supplement is or desire is] economy exposes and protects us at the same time according to the play of forces and of the difference of forces" (OG, p. 155).

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<sup>23</sup> "Rousseau neutralizes oppositions by erasing them; and he erases them by affirming contradictory values at the same time" (OG, p. 189).

This strange logic of the supplement, through which two contrary terms are allowed to dwell together, is found also in Husserl's discourse in regard to logical language and metaphor. Husserl's wish to say logically the structure of transcendental experience and expressivity is to be supplemented by a non-logical metaphor. Otherwise, his desire to say and name presence cannot hope to enter into discourse and is to be threatened with extinction. Thus the wish for logical language is to be undermined from the beginning by its own necessity. That is to say, his logical wish survives only by differing from itself, only by adopting non-logical metaphor within itself which it wants to exclude. This unexpected inclusion of metaphor allows his logical wish not only to be preserved but also to assert itself by resisting the power of metaphor. Logical language seems to find its space only by excluding and dispelling the primitive metaphor from the territory of discourse. "If the metaphor of the stratum does not correspond to the structure one seeks to describe, how," Derrida asks, "could it have been used so long?" (MP, p. 159). Against its wish, logical language has to employ metaphor only in order to suppress and limit its power so that the former finds its discursive space in the excluded and controlled space of the latter. Husserl's discourse is thus deeply entangled within the logic of the supplement,

and his desire to say and name presence survives by occupying the middle point between logical language and non-logical language.

The relation of logical language with metaphor is that of suppression and vigilance. Philosophy with its ideal of pure logical language has to severely limit and exclude literature within itself so that the former attains its ideal by the limitation and exclusion of the latter. However, because literature is too deeply within philosophy to the degree that their boundary does not exist, the latter's suppression of the former is to be continuously postponed. There is no end to the vigilance of philosophy. Insofar as philosophy's vigilance is to continue endlessly, it is always with literature within itself and pure logic is always involved with metaphor. Thus metaphor is not mere rhetoric, but the very possibility of language as well as the possibility of the philosopher's pure logic:

Before being a rhetorical procedure within language, metaphor would be the emergence of language itself. And philosophy is only this language; in the best of cases, and in an unaccustomed sense of the expression, philosophy can only speak it, state the metaphor itself, which amounts to thinking the metaphor within the silent horizon of the nonmetaphor: Being (WD, p. 112).

Being is thought only through ontic metaphor, as the structure of transcendental experience is thought only in terms of the metaphor of stratum. This unwelcome emergence of metaphor thus has to be suppressed so that the thought

of Being and noematic experience does not fall into metaphor. The thought of philosophy is never identical with the metaphor of literature. Between them lies a certain Derridian differance; each territory is defined only by way of its difference from the other, and since the history of definition is never to end, their territories (their meanings) are never clearly demarcated. Because they are unable to define each other with resolution, the history of definition is only to be delayed, with the consequent result that there is no proper territory of either philosophy or literature, or either logical language or metaphor.

Without a clear demarcation dividing one from the other, there is only difference between philosophy and literature. The lack of the demarcation does not, however, mean that their original and proper territories are forgotten or bleared away by some mistake or violence: there have never been fixed and proper territories between them. Contrary to the illusion of original and proper territories, their present varying territories came into being only because of their differance--differance opening space between them. This original differance prohibits any thinking of their relation in terms of real violence. Even though philosophy is found to be invaded by literature and has to suppress the false intruder, philosophy does not



have any original claim to its supposed present territory, which is considered to be invaded by literature.

Literature does not intrude into the territory of philosophy, since the former has always been within the latter. The struggle between philosophy and literature is thus a conflict without any real violence. If "a speech produced without the least violence would determine nothing, would say nothing, would offer nothing to the other" (WD, p. 147), that violence is original violence, intrinsic and propitious to speech itself, so that the meaning of violence as an injuring or damaging force is canceled off. By this original violence of literature, philosophy benefits from its violator. "A Being without violence," as Derrida says, "would be a Being which would occur outside the existent; nothing, nonhistory, nonoccurrence, nonphenomenality" (WD, p. 147). If Being cannot occur without violence, Being then is already violence--to be more correct, non-violent violence.

If Being is in need of ontic metaphor to be spoken, philosophy needs equally to repress this ontic metaphor by philosophy. If the desire to say and name presence and Being has to rely on metaphor, this same desire at the same time has to suppress metaphor. Although Being is spoken by metaphor, the former is not identical with the latter as Being is never to be identified with being. There is

always an unsurmountable abyss between Being and metaphor, and between philosophy and literature, without which they cannot be thought and spoken as such. However, because of this fundamental difference and abyss between them, metaphor, as soon as it is spoken, is to be repressed and kept within a limit imposed by philosophy. If philosophy cannot think and say Being and presence with its own terms, it is allowed to do so by repressing metaphor, by saying "no" to metaphor and thereby expecting "yes" to Being and presence; metaphor is born only to be negated.<sup>24</sup> In a certain way, Being and presence are thus the effect of philosophy's negation of metaphor, the effect enveloped within philosophy's metaphysical desire. Then metaphysical desire simultaneously creates metaphors and abandons them in an endless chain of supplements. Desire is destined to say Being only by metaphor, and the same desire is also destined to discard metaphor in order to be more deeply appropriated into the truth of Being--which is of course another gesture of falling back upon metaphor.

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<sup>24</sup> This negation is not a Hegelian negation as Aufhebung. Contrary to Hegel's negation of metaphor for the sake of idealization and conceptualization, the negation of metaphor here is nothing other than affirming another metaphor or negation without idealization. For Derrida's criticism of Hegelian negation and contradiction, see Gasché, The Tain of Mirror, 87-95.

### III. Derrida and Ricoeur on Metaphor and Metaphysics

The subtle and strange difference between philosophy and literature is for Heidegger a form of unity within difference, but for Derrida an irreducible difference. If unity holds them together, this unity for Derrida is a violent unity created out of the discursive necessity of metaphysical desire. Since this desire averts from the logic of identity, philosophy and literature, though they seem to contradict each other, are safely contained within the logic of the supplement. In Derrida's re-thinking of difference in terms of difference, the unifying role of Being in Heidegger is replaced by that of desire. As Derrida mentions in Of Grammatology, the unity of desire is the unity of the contrary. Thus in his reading of Husserl in "Form and meaning," Derrida conceives the relation of metaphor and logical language as a supplementary relation; metaphor realizes logical language to come into being by way of its self-effacement or by the latter's suppression of the former. To the proportion that metaphor is directed toward meaning and has a negative relation to the proper, metaphor, according to Gasché's comment on Derrida, is "by nature a metaphysical concept."<sup>25</sup> Metaphor belongs to

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<sup>25</sup> Gasché, The Tain of the Mirror, 293.

metaphysics but with a fundamentally irreducible difference. The question is therefore the matter of degree, not of kind, that is, how much metaphor is metaphysical and how much metaphor plays the role of a metaphysical concept. And if metaphor is not irreducible to metaphysics, then how much is metaphor capable of upsetting the metaphysics of presence? In attempting to face these questions, it seems in order to clarify the questions by considering them from a non-Heideggerian and non-Derridian perspective, from a perspective offered by Ricoeur in his critique of Heidegger and Derrida in The Rule of Metaphor. Along with Ricoeur I will re-open the question hermeneutically, neither ontologically nor grammatologically, of difference between philosophy and literature, in order to see how Ricoeur reformulates the same question and how Derrida answers to Ricoeur.

In considering Ricoeur's critique of Heidegger's condemnation of metaphor as belonging within metaphysics, we are not interested with how Ricoeur successfully defends metaphor against Heidegger's thesis.<sup>26</sup> At issue are the questionable meaning of metaphysics and its relation to

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<sup>26</sup> Derrida summarizes Ricoeur's defense of metaphor against Heidegger's attack as in the following: "The metaphoricity of Heidegger's text would overflow what he says thematically, in the mode of simplificatory denunciation, of the so-called 'metaphysical' concept of metaphor" (RT, p. 20).

metaphor. For Ricoeur, Heidegger's definition of metaphysics is "forced beyond any justification," like a "Procrustean bed," because what is named by Heidegger as metaphysics is anything but metaphysics (RM, p. 283). Heidegger confuses, consequently, metaphysics with representative thought, and with the theory of language as expression. And that confusion is willful and is motivated by vengeance; "This inclosure of the previous history of Western thought within the unity of 'the' metaphysical seems to me to express a sort of vengeance ... along with a will to power that seems inseparable" (RM, p. 311). If we accept Ricoeur's reading of Heidegger, we can rephrase Heidegger's original statement into another one though at the risk of considerably undermining the force of the original: The metaphorical (within the traditional concept of metaphor as a mere rhetoric and decoration) exists only within representative thought or within one branch of Western philosophy. Thus distinguishing his metaphysics from Heideggerian definition, Ricoeur redefines metaphysics as speculative discourse, "the condition of the possibility of the conceptual" as distinct from the metaphorical (RM, p. 300). Here I underline the word "possibility" in order to relieve him from any misleading implication that "they can be clearly and absolutely

distinguished from each other."<sup>27</sup> When Ricoeur speaks of the distinction, it is neither in a sense of the forgetting of the difference between them, nor in a sense of radical separation with the clear-cut boundary between them. And in proposing the distinction between the speculative and the metaphorical, or between philosophy and literature, Ricoeur's attempt seems to be focused on avoiding their undifferentiated identification, rather than on asserting their teleologically or epistemologically independent modes of discourse.

Even though Ricoeur does not, like Heidegger and Derrida, assert a clear and absolute separation of philosophy from literature, Ricoeur's conception of the difference between them cannot be seen as another expression of Heideggerian difference or Derridian difference. For more clarification of this point, a useful starting point may be Ricoeur's description of the "possibility" and "necessity" of speculative discourse, that is, metaphysics, which is defined against and is opposed to the metaphorical.

It can be shown that, on the one hand, speculative discourse has its condition of possibility in the semantic dynamism of metaphorical utterance, and that, on the other hand, speculative discourse has its necessity in itself, in putting the resources of conceptual articulation to work. These are resources that doubtless belong to the mind itself, that are

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<sup>27</sup> Gasché, The Tain of the Mirror, 51.

the mind itself reflecting upon itself. In other words, the speculative fulfills the semantic exigencies put to it by the metaphorical only when it establishes a break marking the irreducible difference between the two modes of discourse (*italic in the original*) (RM, p. 296).

To say that concept has its "possibility" in metaphor is another way of affirming their speculative continuity. Though they seem to be opposed to each other, their opposition is a matter of degree, resembling the distribution of light ranging from daylight to darkness. If light is continuous but is divided into light and darkness according to its amount of distribution, metaphor and concept have their unbroken continuity because they participate in speculative possibility. This continuum is, however, to be broken out of speculative "necessity," since the conceptual has to "establish a break" from the metaphorical. Otherwise, there would be no philosophy. The necessity is also the necessity for philosophy. Here the act of establishing a break between the continuity of the metaphorical and the conceptual is not a real violence, because the former demands, according to Ricoeur, such a break in order to resolve its unstable tension and thus to satisfy its "semantic exigencies." The metaphorical does not say what it wants to say, so that there always remains an unsatisfied desire waiting for the conceptual for its fulfillment. The metaphorical is thus to be carried away into the conceptual.

The continuity of the conceptual and the metaphorical for Ricoeur is also the continuous relation of the foundation and the founding, and the ground and the grounding. The metaphorical with its shade of darkness is like the unexplored territory with its abundant potentialities, which can be appropriated into the conceptual as soon as the work of grounding and founding comes to an end. When the conceptual explodes into the metaphorical, the former applies its already-established primary notions and principles to the latter in order to decide how much it can be conceptualized. Then the paradigm of philosophers in their relation to literature would be an ancient hero fighting against the force of darkness to subdue and subordinate it to that of light.

When the philosopher fights on two fronts, against the seduction of the ineffable and against the power of 'ordinary speech' (Sprechen), in order to arrive as a 'saying' (Sagen) that would be the triumph neither of inarticulateness nor of the signs available to the speaker and manipulated by him--is he not in a situation comparable to that of the thinker of Antiquity of the Middle Ages, seeking his path between the powerlessness of a discourse given over to the dissemination of meanings and the mastery of univocity through the logic of genera? (RM, p. 310).

What the metaphorical is to the dissemination of meanings is what the conceptual is to univocity. The task of philosophy lies in dominating and then subduing the unstable and dynamic meanings of metaphor to conceptual univocity. As Ricoeur puts it in Aristotelian terms, to



create metaphor is to "apprehend the 'same' within and in spite of 'difference' (RM, p. 296). If metaphor is conceptual, it is a concept with the irreducible difference or light with shadow. Thus the gain of meanings in metaphor is "not carried to the concept, to the extent that it remains caught in the conflict of 'same' and 'difference,' although it constitutes the rough outline and the demand for an instruction through the concept" (RM, p. 297). Poets present their crude metaphors to the scrutiny of philosophers who have to judge their validity. "Metaphor," Ricoeur says, "is living by virtue of the fact that it introduces the spark of imagination into a 'thinking more' at the conceptual level" (RM, p. 303).

According to Ricoeur's delineation of the relation between the metaphorical and the conceptual, the former is always on the way toward the latter and as such metaphor is always philosophical even before being reduced into concept. To put it in Heideggerian terms, the metaphorical is pre-ontological, pre-philosophical, pre-predicative, and pre-scientific. Metaphor might have inaugurated philosophy, but as soon as the latter is born it is to be dominated by the latter. And metaphor is always the philosopher's metaphor indicating the unknown territory of philosophy; it is by means of metaphor that philosophy expands its kingdom. To the extent that metaphor is always

and already philosophical, Ricoeur's distinction between the poet's metaphor and the philosopher's cannot be maintained, since there is no poet's metaphor at all.<sup>28</sup> All metaphor is pre-conceptual and all difference is ready to be reduced into sameness.

If Heidegger's and Derrida's difference between philosophy and literature is never to be reduced into the same, Ricoeur sees yet in the difference a possibility for sameness. This possibility for Ricoeur is no doubt only uni-directional, that is, an ascendance from metaphor to concept and from literature to philosophy. In his hermeneutical thought, the descendance of philosophy into literature is unthinkable--which would result in the death of philosophy and of knowledge: "In the horizon opened up by the speculative, 'same' grounds 'similar' and not the inverse" (RM, p. 301). Thus Ricoeur's thinking of metaphor is regulated and determined by a manifestly philosophical consideration of the possibility of speculative discourse as independent of metaphor. This hierarchical valorization of philosophy over literature does not allow them to be conceived in terms of Heideggerian or Derridian difference

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<sup>28</sup> Ricoeur introduces this distinction when he discusses Heidegger's notion of Ereignis: "Even if Ereignis is called a metaphor, it is a philosopher's metaphor, in the sense in which the analogy of being can, strictly speaking, be termed a metaphor, but one which always remains distinct from a poet's metaphor" (RM, p. 310).

without hierarchy. Derrida's rhetorical question therefore can be applied to Ricoeur: "Are not all metaphors, strictly speaking, concepts, and is there any sense in setting metaphor against concept?" (*italic in the original*) (MP, p. 264). Even though Ricoeur criticizes Derrida's "White Mythology" in The Rule of Metaphor,<sup>29</sup> the former only confirms the latter's verdict that metaphor is a philosophical concept.<sup>30</sup>

Since metaphor is already and always philosophical, Ricoeur finds in metaphor the necessary condition and justification for the speculative discourse and metaphysics. In his thinking of the difference between metaphor and metaphysics, Ricoeur replaces Heidegger's unity of Being by the unity of metaphysics. Even the comparative darkness of metaphor (the same within and in spite of difference) is penetrated by the seeing

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<sup>29</sup> Ricoeur's whole criticism of Derrida in The Rule of Metaphor, I think, is based on a misreading. "The efficacy of worn-out metaphor" and "the deep-seated unity of metaphorical and analogical transfer of visible being to intelligible being" (RM, p. 285), the two assertions which Ricoeur discerns as Derrida's, are what Derrida attempts to criticize in "White Mythology." If Ricoeur successfully demonstrates the falsehood of these assertions, his demonstration has no bearing on Derrida. For Derrida's defense of his position against Ricoeur, see "The Retrait of Metaphor," 12-16.

<sup>30</sup> As with Derrida's other comments, this is not his own position, but the result of his reading of Aristotle and Hegel in "White Mythology."

enlightening eyes of metaphysics (the same); "metaphysics ... seizes the metaphorical process in order to make it work to the benefit of metaphysics" (RM, p. 294-95). While Heidegger's Being is revealing and withdrawing at once, Ricoeur's metaphysics presupposes the center of pure light without any shadow, concept without any metaphor. This presupposition is drawn by Ricoeur from the philosophical possibility of metaphor and at the same time from the strong necessity of philosophy for univocity and concept. Is his proposal for the speculative discourse only an axiological and moral necessity punctuated by the metaphysical desire of vouloir-dire? Is he, like Rousseau and Husserl, destined to say something other than what he wants to say? In other words, how would Ricoeur answer the Derridian question of the status of discourse on metaphor?

While discussing the possibility of speculative discourse as distinct from the metaphorical, Ricoeur asks the Derridian question to himself whether or not his discourse belongs to the metaphorical order or whether there is any standpoint outside language.<sup>31</sup> To this self-

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<sup>31</sup> Let me quote in full Ricoeur's question: "It will be objected, before proceeding any farther, that it is not possible to speak of a relation like this because there is no standpoint outside language and because it is and has always been in language that men claim to speak about language" (*italic in the original*) (RM, p. 304).

stylized Derridian question, Ricoeur answers positively, because:

language possesses the reflective capacity to place itself at a distance and to consider itself, as such and in its entirety, as related to the totality of what is. Language designates itself and its other ... it is the knowledge that accompanies the referential function itself, the knowledge of its being-related to being. This reflective knowledge allows language to know that it is installed in being (RM. 304).

Here Ricoeur speaks of "split reference" in language, that is, words referring to "being and not being" at once.<sup>32</sup> When Husserl, for example, names metaphorically "stratum" for the structure of transcendental experience, he is not strictly bound to the word "stratum," since he has in mind the referential content of what he wants to say. Although the word "stratum" belongs undoubtedly to the linguistic order, it retains at the same time a certain relation with the Husserlian structure of experience. To the extent that this "stratum" is and is not, Husserl is released from the bondage of language and can speak of what he wants to say. Not only "stratum" is a word in the totality of language, but also it has "its being-related to being" "in the totality of what is."

Ricoeur's standpoint outside language is, it seems, nothing other than another expression of Derrida's vouloir-

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<sup>32</sup> See "The Case against Reference" in Chapter 7 of The Rule of Metaphor, 224.

dire.<sup>33</sup> When one speaks, one is always destined to say other than what he wants to say. The gap between vouloir-dire and dire is freedom on the one hand, and absence on the other. The term vouloir-dire has a split reference in itself. Because of this split reference, Rousseau, as seen in the foregoing analysis, could say the contrary without contradiction, and Heidegger could name Being by way of ontic metaphors. The simultaneous presence of "is" and "is not" also names the unattainable and unrealizable structure of desire in wish-to-say. In wishing to say something, "is" is endlessly postponed to appear as such in the linguistic structure of "is not"; Husserl wants to say the structure of experience with the metaphor of stratum, but he ends up refining metaphor or limiting its force. Thus the freedom to say Being, presence, and speculative discourse also implies the impossibility of attaining the goal. Ricoeur's standpoint outside language is already deeply entangled within the inside of language, and his split reference only names a metaphysical desire with its intrinsic impossibility of fulfillment. If there is any "totality of what is" in language, it is the totality of

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<sup>33</sup> And Ricoeur's split reference is another expression of Derrida's general reference without referent. "There is no simple reference...But it is a difference without reference, or rather a reference without a referent, without any first or last unit, a ghost that is the phantom of no flesh" (D, p. 206).

desire: in the absence of being "what is left is only the writing of dreams, a fiction that ... mimicry without imitation, without verisimilitude, without truth or falsity ..." (D, p. 211). And if language is related to being, it is always through the medium of desire.<sup>34</sup>

If Ricoeur's speculative discourse is punctuated by desire, the possibility of concept is also governed by the structure of desire that unifies the contrary without contradiction. As discussed above, Ricoeur sees that the concept establishes univocity by marking a break from the polysemy or dissemination of metaphor. Even though this break is justified by Ricoeur on the ground of the speculative continuity to which even metaphor participates with less degree of conceptuality, it becomes violence as soon as Ricoeur's hierarchy is reversed or is put into question. If his hierarchy is the result of metaphysical desire to dominate metaphor by philosophy, the question arises in regard to the justice of concept to mark a break from metaphor. Even granted that the speculative discourse penetrates into the metaphorical as light does toward darkness, the act of separation still presupposes an exclusion of the other, no matter how insignificant and

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<sup>34</sup> Gasché comments on the same quoted passage of Ricoeur's that the totality is either "a formal synthesis similar to the Kantian 'I think,' or "a totality comparable to the Hegelian Absolute." See The Tain of Mirror, 51.

trivial the distribution of the other may be. Without such an exclusion of the other, concept cannot be born. Concept is not something given, but is something produced and fabricated out of the conceptual necessity. Without this necessity being satisfied even by means of violence, discourse as well as philosophy do not come into being. "Each time that polysemia is irreducible, when no unity of meaning is even promised to it, one," Derrida says, "is outside language." (MP. 248). Thus the univocity of concept or the sameness without difference found philosophy and discourse to be what they are; the possibility of concept is the very possibility of metaphysics. But that foundation, since based on the violent break from metaphoricality, is "the place of unease, of the regulated incoherence within conceptuality" (OG, p. 237-8).

Ricoeur's comment on Heidegger's reduction of Western thought into the unity of the metaphysical is revealing and suggestive in that the former discerns in the latter, to our surprise, not only a vengefulness, but also a symptom of "a will to power." Why is Heidegger's definition of metaphysics to be considered on the horizon of symptom? Isn't it that all metaphysics tends to be the expression of a will to power or a sort of vengefulness against the other such as literature and metaphor? The question about



metaphysics complicates itself, when we consider the status of discourse about metaphysics. As we have discussed already, metaphysics names a desire for or a wish to say presence and Being, rather than a system of their truth. If metaphysics is based on this unattainable desire, there cannot be any unity of metaphysics comparable to the Heideggerian definition. Whenever Derrida speaks of metaphysics, he, therefore, does so with a certain reservation, as in the following: "I have never believed in the existence or in the consistency of something like metaphysics itself" (RT, p. 14). If there is no homogeneous unity of metaphysics, isn't it that every utterance made about metaphysics is ingrained with a certain amount of will to power and vengefulness? And isn't it that all discourse on metaphysics tends to be metaphorical if there is no univocity or concept of its meaning? These questions remind us of Borges' closing statement of his essay "The Fearful Sphere of Pascal" that "the universal history is the history of the different intonations given a handful of metaphors." We wonder if the history of metaphysics is the history of the different intonations on the metaphor of presence or Being.

Derrida in "White Mythology" maintains that the history of Western philosophy has been dominated by the metaphor of the sun, the universal heliotrope, from Plato

up to Husserl and Heidegger.<sup>35</sup> Insofar as metaphysics is determined by this heliotrope, metaphysical desire seeks to subdue and dominate it, of course without success. If there is a philosophical concept of metaphor, and if metaphor has been always philosophical, this concept is born out of such a profound philosophical necessity to reduce the other into its same. To the extent that the field of philosophical discourse is marked by its fight against the metaphorical, the history of metaphysics is also the history of metaphor. This metaphysical history of the concept of metaphor, Derrida says, "yields knowledge, demands from the epistemologist construction, rectifications, critical rules of importation and exportation" (MP, p. 264). From a Heideggerian perspective, what metaphor is to metaphysics is what beings or becoming are to Being. Metaphysics for Heidegger marks the Platonic separation of Being from becoming or appearing and reducing the latter into the former.<sup>36</sup> In Aristotelian phusis, appearance and becoming always signifies "generating what grows," participating to Being in the

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<sup>35</sup> In The Myth of Metaphor, Colin Turbayne speaks of our choice between different metaphysical metaphors. But if the metaphor of sun determines the thought of Being, we wonder whether there is any room for choice between different metaphors, which may be varying intonations for a single metaphor. See his book, 65.

<sup>36</sup> See Heidegger, "Sketches for a History of Being as Metaphysics," in The End of Philosophy.

universal schema of organic unity, so that the Platonic separation is approved and justified teleologically and universally.<sup>37</sup> Without such a separation either of metaphysics from metaphor or of Being from becoming, how can philosophy hope to be philosophy?<sup>38</sup> Due to this fundamental necessity of philosophy, "the movement of metaphor," Derrida comments in "White Mythology," "is nothing more than a movement of idealization," "under the master category of dialectical idealism, to wit, the relève (Aufhebung)" (MP, p. 226).<sup>39</sup>

If Being, Ideas, or presence is thinkable only in terms of ontic metaphors, metaphysics is born out of these indispensable metaphors and is to be circumscribed by them even in its wishful growth into a science. The metaphysical desire to say and name Being qua Being,

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<sup>37</sup> Ricoeur, The Rule of Metaphor, 308, and see a chapter in the same book entitled "Metaphor and the equivocalness of Being: Aristotle," 259-72.

<sup>38</sup> Nietzsche says in Untimely Meditations: "Imagine the extremest possible example of a man who was thus condemned to see everywhere a state of becoming: such a man would no longer believe in his own being, would no longer believe in himself, would see everything flowing asunder in moving points and would lose himself in the stream of becoming ..." (62).

<sup>39</sup> To this Derrida's comment on Hegel Ricoeur adds his own: "Where Hegel saw an innovation of meaning, Derrida sees only the wearing away of metaphor and a drift towards idealization resulting from the dissimulation of this metaphorical origin." (RM. 286).

Derrida's vouloir-dire, is thus to realize itself only to the extent that it speaks of something else, that is, beings. The gap open between wish-to-say and saying, however, is not to be taken as an eternal and irremediable loss--if so, metaphysical desire would be extinguished. To the extent that metaphor is a philosophical concept, this loss is determined by philosophy as a temporary and provisional one to be redeemed sooner or later in Being's self-revelation.<sup>40</sup> As a mere supplement to Being during its self-withdrawal, ontic metaphors prevail only in order to disappear like darkness as soon as Being discloses itself in its bright daylight. Metaphysics from Plato to Hegel has been constituted by this desire for presence which transforms emergence of metaphors as a temporary loss of meanings. Even though philosophers have been destined to say Being only metaphorically, they were always ready either to dispose of this recurring metaphor or to transform it into the trace or sign of Being.

Insofar as metaphor is indispensable for the discourse of metaphysics and is conceived as a temporary loss of presence and Being, metaphysics becomes a battle ground to fight against the force of metaphor. Even granted that metaphysics has to employ metaphor in order to say Being, metaphor is not to subsist in its materiality as if it were

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<sup>40</sup> See Derrida's "White Mythology," 270.

real Being; instead, it is to erase and efface itself in order to bring Being in its place.<sup>41</sup> If metaphor is always to be translated, this translation is dominated by that metaphysical desire for presence. Within metaphysics, metaphor is in danger of becoming a mere shadow or reflection of Ideas, which is to be translated into its original as soon as it is recognized. In Hegel's Aufhebung, metaphor, for example, is in expectation of idealization in the history of spirit's self-realization. Metaphor is thus Ideas whose arrival is only to be delayed but is supposed to be sure to come. If this is the case, there would be nothing strange in the destination of philosophical metaphor finally to undo itself or to replace itself by Ideas: if metaphor is in complicity with metaphysics, how can it be otherwise then to be transcendent and to wait for its self-cancellation on the arrival of Ideas? But as Derrida's differance demonstrates emphatically, the arrival of Ideas is to be delayed endlessly, and the desire for presence remains only as desire. Saying and meaning in metaphor do never coincide.

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<sup>41</sup> For Derrida, the ideal of language as self-presence and transparency of the interiority in the exteriority is prohibited by the materiality of language--which is also the problem of translation: "the materiality of a word cannot be translated or carried over into another language. Materiality is precisely that which translation relinquishes. To relinquish materiality: such is the driving force of translation" (WD, p. 210).

Even though metaphor means to name the human desire for transcendence and to bring presence into nearness, metaphor does not really say so and thus prohibits any Hegelian negation of difference.

## CONCLUSION

If metaphor is not a mere trope, but a locus of truth's entering into language, the question of metaphor is also the question regarding the nature of truth. Without the preliminary clarification of truth, the question of metaphor cannot help but remain in the dark. As such, my discussion of metaphor in the texts of Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida has always involved the question of how truth is defined and characterized in their texts.

For Nietzsche, truth is the correspondence or coincidence of thought or descriptive knowledge with the thing-in-itself. This conception of truth contains in itself the structural impossibility of attaining truth. Insofar as language is not thing-in-itself and does not possess any objective reality, it does not coincide with the happening of Dionysiac truth. Truth cannot be spoken properly. In the absence of proper or literal representation of truth, all sayings become metaphoric: they "mean to say" truth without really saying it. This metaphoric truth is fundamentally ironic, that is, always and endlessly replacing improper sayings with other improper sayings, since Dionysus does not endure Apollonian false appearances and thus destroys them at the moment of

their birth. As an indispensable alternative to the absent proper saying of truth, metaphor has only temporary value.

After criticizing such a correspondence notion of truth, Heidegger proposes to conceive truth as aletheia, the co-happening of concealment and unconcealment. Truth is not something static and present to be represented by language in their corresponding conformity. For Heidegger, truth is of the nature of verb, rather than of noun, and withdraws itself at the very moment of its revelation. If truth cannot be represented properly and correctly, there is nothing (no presence) to be represented, and truth declines to come to the full light. Thus truth can only be indicated and hinted at by way of metaphor and hint-words. The absence of proper words for truth is due not to the inadequacy of language but to the very nature of truth. Contrary to the Nietzschean depreciation of language as metaphoric, metaphor is the place where truth happens in its simultaneous concealment and unconcealment. Thus in Heidegger's conception of truth as aletheia, the negative tone and value involved in "truth is only metaphorical" is lifted away.

Derrida's statement that metaphor has always been a philosophical concept can be a reflection on metaphor's heavy dependence on the notion of truth for its value. Within the context of truth as correspondence, metaphor



implies an original loss of presence and is punctuated by its nostalgic and metaphysical aspiration. As our discussion of Nietzsche's essay "On Truth and Lying" reveals, the metaphor for metaphor in general is the metaphor of an orphan whose mother dies at her birthpangs. Retaining the memory of the absent Dionysiac truth which has never been present, metaphor aspires to return to and to repossess the lost presence. To the extent of its aspiration for presence, metaphor is metaphysical and transcendental. Metaphysics is a systematic effort to put an end to the wandering of the orphan metaphor by translating it back to its true mother, concept. But for Nietzsche as a strong critique of metaphysics, metaphysics' conceptual translation of metaphor is no less than the committing of another error: contrary to its attempt to find the true mother for metaphor, metaphysics only ends up with matching it with a stepmother. Concept is an institutional forgetting of the lost origin of metaphor.

Through the notions of differance and writing Derrida demonstrates powerfully how Nietzschean wandering metaphor is prohibited from being united with its true mother. As not only a system of difference, but a system of deferral as well, language delays endlessly the wandering journey of metaphor and replaces metaphor with another metaphor without reducing it to a concept. Structurally speaking,

the metaphysical aspiration inherent within metaphor is incapable of attaining its goal, and it therefore names only a desire for presence (vouloir-dire). Here what requires special attention in the relation between metaphysics and metaphor is the other side of this structural impossibility of metaphysical desire. Metaphysics always attains its goal metaphorically, though not literally. As a trope saying one thing but meaning another, metaphor justifies and authenticates metaphysical desire; though metaphysics uses only orphan metaphors, it always means to say their true parents, presence. Because of this profound complicity between metaphysics and metaphor and their strange mutual dependence, Derrida always tends to locate places of metaphor in his reading of philosophical texts.

In his reading of Heidegger, Derrida detects ontic metaphors in Heidegger's ontology, amounting to a violence involved in the saying of Being. But isn't it a misreading of Heidegger to view him from a Nietzschean perspective of truth as correspondence? If there were any stable presence or Kantian thing-in-itself to be represented by way of conformity, the ontic metaphors, as Nietzsche confirms, would no doubt be improper modes of saying truth, since truth is supposed to be spoken properly. But for Heidegger, truth, far from being some objective content to

be represented, is a dynamic happening of conflict between revelation and withdrawal or between the earth and the world. In its nature and origin truth does not allow any "proper" sayings. This absence of proper sayings in Heidegger's aletheia is due neither to the loss of presence nor to the necessary violence involved in saying truth. If there is violence in Heidegger's ontic metaphors, this is an original violence, not a linguistic one; that is, the violence in the very nature of truth as the conflict between opening and closing. From a Heideggerian perspective, metaphor is an ontological journey in the space-time between the opening and closing of truth of Being.

If truth is conceived as Heideggerian aletheia, metaphor is neither an alternative to ideal proper words, nor a nostalgic aspiration for the lost presence. For Heidegger, the traditional priority given to literal and logical language goes hand in hand with the history of metaphysics as the ontology of presence. In this ontology of presence the presencing and absencing of Being is completely forgotten and Being is rendered as Ideas or presence, thereby giving rise to the logical and conceptual language paradigm (language as assertions). Violence in language adheres to concepts and assertions, since aletheia is stabilized and immobilized into static contents. If

such an immobilizing tendency of logical language is considered, what is urgently demanded is to mobilize or metaphorize language so that the presencing and absencing of Being is to be restored into language. Metaphor is the locus wherein beings are on the way toward Being, while concepts falsely identify themselves with Being. In Heideggerian ontology the space of language is the in-between of beings and Being, and ontic metaphors travel in the space of the ontological difference.

Derrida's notion of play beyond truth or falsity, as well as his notion of differance beyond Being, contributes to a thinking of metaphor without its ontological and aletheological foundation. With Derrida, metaphor wanders not in the space-time, as Heidegger speaks of it, but in the system of differance devoid of a center to affirm and support its ontological legitimacy. To the extent that there is no discourse immune to rhetorical and figural plays, Derrida affirms metaphor, since it cannot be avoided. This affirmation however is not substantial, but deconstructive. Derrida affirms metaphor as a deconstructive strategy to undermine and dismantle any metaphysical claim to non-metaphoric truth and to expose a profound complicity between metaphysics and metaphor. In Derridian deconstruction, the journey of metaphor is like that of a guerrilla: it invades metaphysics in order to

destroy it from the inside and then withdraw immediately. Here the question arises regarding where metaphor has to return to after withdrawing from the camp of metaphysics. Derrida neither provides any answer nor takes any position. If he has any position, it is an undecidable position which is suspended between truth as correspondence and truth as *aletheia*, and between the traditional concept of metaphor and Heideggerian metaphor as hint-words.

While Nietzsche's metaphor continuously destroys and replaces itself in order to resolve the inner contradiction of Apollonian appearances, Derrida's metaphor is in a continuous warfare with metaphysics. If for Derrida as for Nietzsche metaphor seems to be something to be avoided, it is because they are still bound to the metaphysical concept of metaphor as conceptual interpretation. However, if we forsake such a traditional paradigm of metaphor, why do we have to avoid metaphor or to use it for a deconstructive purpose? For Heidegger, metaphor happens in the struggle between the earth and the world, and that happening coincides not only with unconcealment, but also with concealment. As hint-words, metaphor travels in the time-space between Being and beings. This ontological journey of metaphor is a journey into the unknown, into the unthought, and beyond any metaphysical closure. concealment. As a mode of saying something without meaning

it, metaphor for Nietzsche, Derrida, and Heidegger, has the same signification, but with different values. Seen from a Heideggerian perspective, an attempt to avoid metaphor and to undermine its value is tied up with the metaphysics of presence, which turns discourse into assertions and scientific statements, thereby forgetting the presencing of Being. For Heidegger, to affirm metaphor as hint-words is to enter into a thinking of difference between beings and Being and to stay within the space of difference, of course without attempting to translate or transform difference into sameness or the identity of logical space. Thus a metaphoric sameness, as Ricoeur says, is always within and in spite of difference. Without reducing the other to identity or suspending the presencing of Being, metaphor instigates truth to happen in its profound concealment.

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## VITA

Jonggab Kim was born in Jeung-Eub, the Republic of Korea in 1959. He received his B.A. in English in 1976 from Konkuk University. He then came to U.S.A. in 1986 and was awarded his M.A. in English in 1989, and his Ph.D. in English in 1992 from Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.



DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

**Candidate:** Jonggab Kim

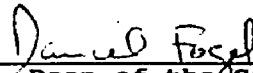
**Major Field:** English

**Title of Dissertation:** Metaphor within/without Metaphysics:  
Neitzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida

**Approved:**



Major Professor and Chairman

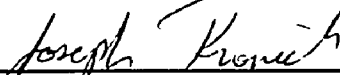


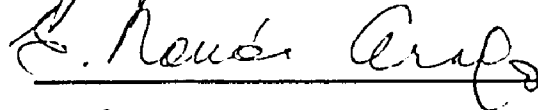
Dean of the Graduate School


**EXAMINING COMMITTEE:**











**Date of Examination:**

February 3, 1992